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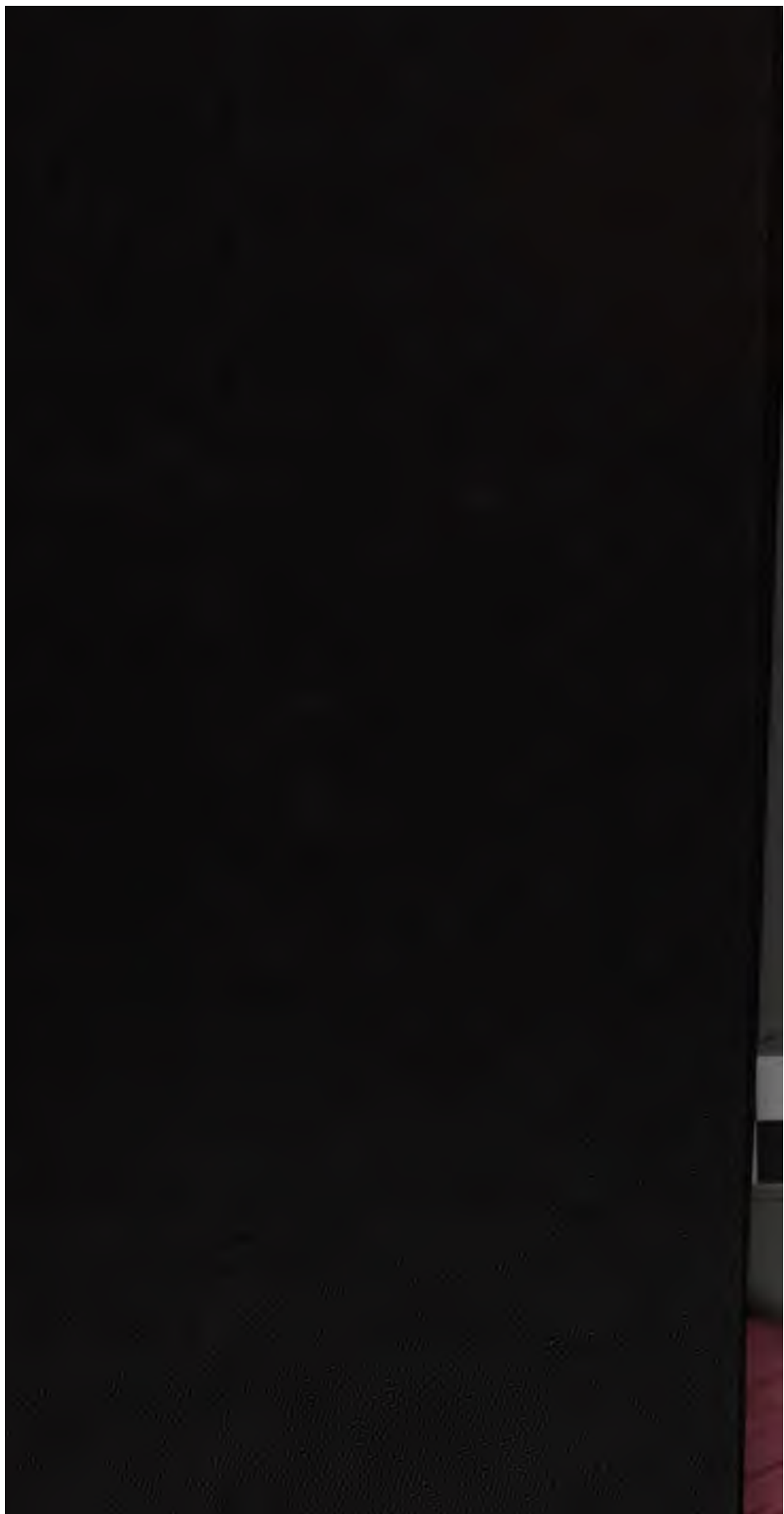
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SELF-EDUCATION;

OR

THE MEANS AND ART

OF

MORAL PROGRESS.

TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH OF

M. LE BARON DEGERANDO.



BOSTON :
PUBLISHED BY CARTER AND HENDÉE.

1830.

R. L. S.

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B-5

DISTRICT OF MASSACHUSETTS.....TO WIT :

District Clerk's Office.

BE IT REMEMBERED, That on the twentyfirst day of July A. D. 1830, in the fiftyfifth year of the Independence of the UNITED STATES OF AMERICA, Carter and Hendee, of the said District, have deposited in this Office the Title of a Book, the Right whereof they claim as Proprietors, in the words following, *to wit* :

'Self-Education ; or the Means and Art of Moral Progress. Translated from the French of M. Le Baron Degerando.'

In Conformity to the Act of the Congress of the United States, entitled 'An Act for the encouragement of learning, by securing the copies of Maps, Charts and Books, to the Authors and Proprietors of such copies, during the times therein mentioned ;' and also to an Act entitled 'An Act supplementary to an Act, entitled, an Act for the encouragement of learning, by securing the copies of Maps, Charts and Books to the Authors and Proprietors of such copies during the times therein mentioned ; and extending the benefits thereof to the arts of designing, engraving, and etching historical and other prints.'

JOHN W. DAVIS, *Clerk of the District of Massachusetts.*

TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE.

MONS. DEGERANDO, in one of the notes to the following work, remarks, that it was originally destined only to be known by a small circle of friends, but that the duty of publishing it, had been laid upon him by a voice sacred to him, probably by the voice of the friend to whom he has dedicated his work. This translation has had an origin, similar to that of the original work. It was made for a party of friends, and with no intention of publishing it; but their united suffrages have brought it before the American public.

The translator feels much diffidence, however, in presenting it to the world. Not that any doubt can be entertained as to the purity and elevation of its morality, but because the power of moral precepts over the mind, depends so essentially upon the style in which they are presented. Not less than those thoughts and feelings which form the essence of poetry, the ideas and representations of moral truth and beauty, are so inseparable from the precise words in which the creating mind of the author first clothed them, that a work on this subject seems to lose as much by translation as a poem.

It has been lately proved to us that the beautiful meditations of the devout Fenelon, may be transfused into our native tongue; but perhaps it will be admitted that pious meditations, and epistolary

exhortation, are more easily translated from the French into the English. Such subjects are admirably adapted to the genius of the French language, and we may profitably catch some of its tact and grace in our translation. But our taste in regard to the style of a work on the grave subject of moral conduct, is decidedly different from all that savours of the French style. We require a condensation and chastity of expression, and almost an exclusion of lively imagery, very distant from the play of fancy, and the variety and freedom of illustration, which characterise the work of M. Degerando. A perfectly literal translation would perhaps give it a trifling air to an English reader ; and this would do so little justice to the deep seriousness of the author, that it was of all things else to be avoided. Yet the endeavour to be strictly faithful to all the author's ideas, while keeping in mind a decidedly different style of expression, has been felt so difficult and delicate a task, that the translator cannot, without presumption, expect to have completely succeeded in the latter object.

But a work on the subject of moral self-culture, adapted to minds which shrink from metaphysical disquisition, is a want in our community universally and deeply felt. And the reflection that the worth of the moral counsels contained in this work, cannot be entirely shadowed, and that they will do good, in every degree, that they have any effect, has sustained the translator's courage to the end.

Boston, July 20.

TO MY BEST FRIEND.

To offer to thee this work, is to render to thee what I owe. In collecting the experiences of my life, upon what is good and beautiful in human characters and actions, thy example and discourses have occupied the first place in my recollections. I have sought to determine what constitutes the true merit of character and of actions, the degree of approbation which they obtain, the value of the enjoyment they procure, and I know not a better judge than thyself. Thy suffrage will be the sanction of my labor, and a sufficient reward.

27 December, 1823.

P. S. This gift, which thou didst so kindly agree to accept, I can now, alas, only place upon thy tomb! Let it remain, the homage of the most tender affection to thy memory! May it still preserve to us some features of thy image!

July, 1824.



PREFACE.

As morality is both a science and an art, there are two distinct modes of treating it : we may give a systematic exposition of the principles of its beautiful theories ; or we may collect its counsels for applying these principles to the conduct of life.

It has been generally thought that these two modes were essentially distinct ; and writers have generally confined themselves, more or less exclusively, to one of them. But the author of the following meditations, has believed it possible, and desirable, to unite these two methods ; that the doctrines might be tested, confirmed, and made fruitful, by practical views ; and that the recommendations and precepts might receive from their connexion with doctrines, new dignity, force, and light. He has thought, that, as it is peculiar to the wise man to carry his principles into his conduct, so the teachings of wisdom may display the accordance of principles and practice : and if it is sometimes well to consider the science and the art separately, in order to preserve to each their distinctive character ; it is also useful, to consider them, sometimes, in union with each other, since they have a common aim ; to study their relations, since they lend each other mutual aid, and to maintain the natural alliance which unites them, in order to gather their fruits.

We all know how much industry owes to a similar connexion between the arts and the physical sciences. May we not hope that the study of the laws of the human faculties, and the conditions to which they are subjected, by assisting us to direct them aright, may procure a similar advantage to morality?

What the author has believed useful, he has attempted to accomplish. He might have endeavoured to justify his opinion by a profound discussion. But he has preferred to present to the public a work, conceived in this intention, and to leave the rest to the judgment of his readers. He only asks that a want of success in the execution, which may be entirely personal, may not be conclusive against the opinion that has guided him; and that his example may not discourage others who are capable of a more perfect success.

Paris, July, 1824.

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SELF-EDUCATION.

BOOK I.

THE NATURE OF THE HUMAN FACULTIES. .

CHAP. I.

INTRODUCTION.

THE Education of man commences under the most sacred and benign auspices ; in confiding it to the heart of a mother, Providence seems to have taken it upon itself. Blessed are the mothers who understand their noble prerogative ; blessed the children who can longest reap the benefits of watchfulness and love !

Many individuals have hardly any other education than the maternal : and by the influence, which a virtuous mother exerts over the mind, it is prolonged over many into the years of maturity. All ages ought to find in the education of the cradle the model of self-cultivation : but even in those cases, where it has been such as to be fit for a model, has it been attentively studied ?

In this early education the pupil learns the use of his senses, and how to exercise his faculties. He is taught also two things, which are necessary to initiate him into all things else. He acquires language, and he learns how to love.

Afterwards comes the artificial or school education, which should be a continuation of the preceding ; but which seldom preserves its spirit. At this time there comes together with the

direct instruction which the pupil receives from masters, the less perceptible, but perhaps more powerful and lasting impressions received from daily intercourse with companions and circumstances. This second period of education is profitable in proportion as it trains the pupil to act for himself, and this favors the progressive developments of the gifts of nature. So far as it prepares him to study and improve, it educates him ; but it does not give him science and virtue ; it only puts him in the situation to discover the one and to love the other. It calls therefore for his own cooperation, which becomes more important from day to day, in proportion as his strength increases and his experience is enlarged.

When tutors retire, in the eyes of the superficial, the education is finished. But the means alone are changed. To external education succeeds a purely spontaneous education, peculiarly important and useful ; seconding, more or less, what has been received from without, and making it efficacious. That free activity, which ought hitherto to have cooperated with the instructions of masters, is now left to itself, to invoke and acknowledge a new guide, reflection. It is true, that the pupil in the school of life may abandon himself to circumstances and passion, and trust to the habits already formed ; but then there is no career of progress left open ; a boundary is prematurely presented, and in resigning the prerogatives of youth, all things will appear aberrations, because he feels himself the victim of diverging forces, whose effects he cannot discern, and whose influence he cannot regulate. Then let the voice of friendship make known to him, that he is responsible for his own happiness ; that great duties are evolved from the liberty he possesses ; that from the present moment his destiny is to take its coloring ; or let him throw a searching glance into himself : under what a new aspect life appears ! He pauses, hesitates, interrogates the universe, his destiny, himself. A thousand mysteries rise up to agitate him ; and he would sound their depths. As his ideas enlarge, his problems are multiplied ; and his reason feels the

necessity of a support. The more honest is his heart, the more does he feel the need of being convinced of the precepts, which are to preside over his conduct and secure his happiness. In the career, upon which he eagerly enters with conscious strength, but which is involved in a cloud, he seeks what he may hope for, he inquires what use he is to make of the activity, which consumes him, for what end he is placed on earth, what are the means possessed for attaining that end, what method he must pursue to accomplish it? O then may a good parent be at his side whose life is a book of instruction; or an experienced friend, who, without giving precepts, may awaken and receive his confidence, commune with his heart, and support his good intentions!

The fundamental truth, which solves all the problems that agitate the youthful heart, and trouble growing reason, the truth, which may direct and regulate everything in our earthly career, is this;—*The life of man is in reality but one continued education, the end of which is, to make himself perfect.* Man is always called, not only to govern himself, but to provide for the time to come. Every action exerts an inevitable influence over all that follow. Every step advances him a degree in his career. He must be enlightened by experience, and strengthened by exercise. Some men are not morally adult, until their maturity. Some in old age grow young for virtue. All can improve even at these periods of life. There is an education, as long as there is a future. The moment of commencing the career is the only one, which is fixed; the goal is not fixed. There have been those, whose last days have been also the most beautiful. Let us not however give way to a presumptuous delusion, which would conceal our weakness, and lead us to place too much confidence in the success of our efforts. To try our strength habitually would soon undeceive us: this trial is a light to guard us from presumption, and to give us prudence. Besides, who can know the effects of perseverance, springing out of a sincere and enlightened will? **Regular and continued**

efforts in simple mechanical labors, will produce effects, that seemed quite impossible ; and we sometimes pause with astonishment before these masterpieces, which only are the proof of unwearied industry. What masterpieces would he produce, who was equally faithful and regular in moral exertion ; who asked himself, before acting, what it is best to do ; who always acted up to the measure of his present powers ? What would be the limit of his capacities ? What might he not bring forth from every day, which, bearing in itself an unknown future, Providence seems to create for us constantly new ? How many times a single day has changed the destiny of nations. How many great thoughts and noble resolutions, even a single hour has brought forth. From *time*, the soil which we tread under our feet, there are men who would produce the creations of genius and virtue. There is not a man whom we admire, that would not have failed to excite our esteem, had he been as cowardly and indolent as we are. The man whom we look on with contempt and abhorrence in his degradation, has only resigned the power he possessed of doing good, and neglected himself. Generous resolution could again recover him. There are unknown powers, sleeping unsuspected within all of us, whose mysterious existence may be suddenly revealed to us, by some unexpected circumstance, some great misfortune, deep affliction, noble example ; perhaps by a great fault, or an hour of meditation. What a new world is then revealed ! How surprised we are to discover to what a height we may aspire ! But our attention is soon diverted ; the torrent hurries us away, the veil falls ; the great discovery is forgotten ; we remember it only as the illusion of a moment, perhaps as a regret that may embitter our life. O that we had followed this sacred inspiration ! It would have decided perhaps the character of our whole existence.

School education, even the best, very often fails of effect. The character of great men is always partly their own work. Self-education alone raises us above the vulgar.

By the vulgar we do not mean the obscure. We hope to be better understood ; we mean the low in character and sentiment. It is a fundamental remark that moral progress does not consist in producing extraordinary men. The extraordinary most generally have sacrificed some condition essential to future progress and to happiness. Much less do we pretend to require men of moral elevation to seek an eminent situation in the world, where they may attract attention, and whence they may exert a powerful influence. Real progress may be found in connexion with the destiny and condition of every one ; and may be adapted to the most ordinary occasions. It consists in a complete and harmonious combination of the intellectual and moral faculties ; and it is not striking or surprising to a spectator precisely because everything is conformable to order and simplicity. Thus, moral progress is in fact relative ; it is the exercise of our peculiar vocation. For there is a moral grandeur in every social condition, which is increased by obscurity, and whose highest degree is formed in the virtues which are least worldly ; as there is often a littleness in situations, called elevated, which gives a glory to the favors of fortune. Moral progress is a career open to all ; and to the humble and despised in preference to the distinguished. We do not gain anything by going out of our station, but by conforming to it ; and the less aid and the more obstacles we meet with, so much more merit we obtain. Let not the eminently excellent, therefore, walk before us in vain. Let not their lives merely charm us in description, or affect us like a dramatic scene. Endowed with the same nature, called to the same ends, creatures of the same God, why should we not aspire to share their destiny ? We doubt our own strength, we say. Have we really consulted it ? have we faithfully tried it ?

The means of progress are the only means of preventing, or of raising us from, degradation ; for man has the faculty of deteriorating, as well as of advancing ; and if he does not mount up, is drawn downwards. Even the most gloomy, who are dis-

couraged about human destiny, who doubt the power of virtue, and would accuse us of yielding to illusions, when we adopt the view of infinite perfectibility, may find in the sentiments we present to their meditations, principles of action whose usefulness they cannot dispute; and self-education must seem even to them the only means of preserving the gifts of nature and Providence.

Thus far we have concentrated our attention upon the course of this life only. But the thought of human life as a great and continual education, acquires new grandeur, when looking upon the destiny of man in its whole extent, and, from an elevated point of view, we glance over that unlimited future, which philosophy promises, nature reveals, and religion warrants.

The very faculty of progress, continuous and infinite, furnishes an argument as powerful as it is legitimate, in favor of a future to which it refers, and of which it is the herald. They are the two terms of a magnificent relation. Since man may always improve, there is always a higher existence, that awaits him; since he has the expectation of a higher existence, he must continually improve. (The virtues of old age are the germ of a second youth; like the flowers found under transient frosts, which prelude a new spring.) The mysteries of our temporal existence are the evidences of life's being a preparatory state. It is a long and painful trial to most men; this trial is a pledge. Education is laborious, as it ought to be effective. If we bestow so much care upon that, the fruits of which will only last a few years, and which early death may blight, what efforts, what attention should we not bestow on the fruits that are to endure forever!

As the children of earth, we make immense provision for a short and uncertain journey. How much more should we provide for the abode of immortality, children as we are of heaven! In this point of view, what new value does the period of maturity acquire—a period too often devoted to mere enjoyment. What value is even given to the period of old age—thought to be

only a time of repose. Alas! how troubled is its repose! These seasons of life have always been judged of in their relations to the past; but when considered in relation to future development, they continually grow fruitful. The evening that closes the day, precludes the morrow.

Philosophers have justly remarked, that the only real instruction is that which the pupil draws from his own resources; that true education is not that which transfers opinions already formed, but that which renders us capable of forming good opinions ourselves. This remark is no less applicable to the moral than to the intellectual faculties. As there is an autodidactic culture for the intellect, so there is a spontaneous cultivation for the soul, upon which all real progress in excellence depends. The arts, which contribute to our material wants, are interesting to us; and can we be indifferent to the processes of the art, which creates distinguished men; performs the mighty work of happiness and virtue; and clothes the world with its most beautiful decoration, by elevating human nature to its highest dignity? Of the good themselves we must learn the secrets of this art. They must become our study. We must ask if our maxims are confirmed by their experience; and in borrowing knowledge from them, may we become their interpreter and organ.

If this art, which is the most general as well as the most important of arts, can be reduced to practical rules, they ought to be within reach of every one, being necessary for every one. They ought not merely to be adapted to the privileged few, whom nature has endowed with eminent faculties, and who have less need of directions on account of the abundance of their own inspirations; they should be accommodated to common weakness, and enlighten the first steps (which are often the most difficult) of those, who undertake their own improvement. They should also rest essentially upon facts, which belong to universal experience; they should rest upon familiar truths, which, far from rejecting, because generally known, we should re-

joice to find received and approved by all. It is a noble prerogative of moral truths, that they are founded on general consent, and form, as it were, *the conscience of the human race*. Let us beware of making them less general; they would become less sublime and less useful. They ought to harmonize with a diversity of opinions; at least so far as different opinions accord with the interest of virtue. They should be as free as possible from systematic theories; not that the beautiful and lofty speculations, which embrace both the principles of duty and the cause of moral approbation, may not be one of the most important subjects for meditation; but by uniting this order of speculations with the precepts of an entirely practical art, we run the risk of compromising the latter, in the eyes of those who may not have leisure or courage to judge of such controversies. And farther, those, who have most thoroughly examined these systems, have only been confirmed, that the councils of wisdom are inspired by rectitude of heart. The authors of these various systems, after having differed speculatively, have always arrived at the same practical results, except that the scale of virtues and motives is different. We are perhaps authorised to conclude, therefore, that the truest and best of all systems is that, which, without excluding any, acknowledges in each something useful, wisely combines them, and censures what is incomplete, defective and exclusive in all.

There are, however, fundamental points, that must be established and put beyond dispute. We must understand the conditions, upon which the moral life rests, the elements of which it is composed, in order to decide upon the development it admits of, and the means proper to hasten it towards what it is capable of becoming. Moral life has no less reality than the physical. It has even greater evidence. We know physical life merely from its effects, as we know bodies merely by their surfaces. But we know moral life by the testimony of our inward conscience. The soul is at once actor and witness, in the search we are allowed to make into the depths of our na-

ture. Self-education requires as its prelude the history of the internal man. This history manifests the subject matter of our labor, and the instruments to be used: it will consist of the inward experience, founded upon immediate intuition, more sure than the experience of the external senses, but more delicate and difficult, since it results from reflection, which is a slow faculty, and restrained in its free play by a thousand obstacles. This will constitute the first book of the present treatise.

From this preliminary study we shall learn that the two principal springs of moral progress are Love of excellence and Self-government. These powers make up the whole moral man; the first determining purity of motive, and resting upon disinterestedness, as its essential condition; the latter rendering us capable of acting from the best motives, and taking for granted that man not only has power but authority over himself: one directs to the end, the other furnishes the means.

In the second book, we shall examine how, from the exercise of these two great powers, results all the good there is in us; also, how the degree of their application is the measure of the merit and demerit of human actions, and of the estimation granted them by the judgment of the wise. We shall see them act separately and by turns, as far as they can be separated; and afterwards unite and combine; and it is upon their association and perfect harmony alone, that all moral perfection depends.

In the third and last book, we shall inquire what is the best method of cultivating these two great moral powers, to give them their highest energy and to preserve between them the harmony which is equally necessary to both.

We shall thus be naturally led to seek some remedies for the principal moral diseases that afflict humanity, and particularly perhaps in this age. One disease is that selfishness, which isolates men, rendering them strangers to each other, loosening and destroying the bonds of affection, and concentrating indi-

vidual exertion into a search after pleasure. Another is that weakness of character, which makes men slaves to blind imitation, or to their own inclinations. Would that we, when so many circumstances seem to be calling society to deep morality and solemn destinies, when the dignity of human nature begins to be understood,—would that *we* could lend a feeble aid to heighten this dignity, and keep alive the sacred flame of noble and generous affections !

CHAPTER II.

MOTIVES.

THE human being is essentially one. But he may be considered in relation to the various motives, which are presented to his will. These motives may be divided into five orders, corresponding to his relations with nature and its Author.

When we speak of the sensual nature of man, we mean, that his will may be moved by pleasures and pains purely physical. If he were confined to this sphere, however, he would be a mere animal ; and, being without instinct, would even be inferior to most animals.

But to mere physical sensibility is joined another sensibility, connecting him with all who are similarly endowed. Hence the social nature, which is nourished and unfolded in social intercourse. The affections are also independent of reason and instinctive ; but man begins even in these to differ from a mere animal. Not that animals are so destitute of a social nature as some suppose ; but as the affections demand some reflection and comparison, in man alone they attain beyond a certain degree of developement.

Thirdly, man has an intelligent nature. There are motives, which descend from the understanding to move the heart. The perception of the beautiful and the conviction of the true, acting upon the affections, model them to become the guides of the will.

Fourthly, there are not only sensations, affections and ideas for man. There are duties. For a law speaks to him from the recesses of his being, giving origin to a new order of relations, both with himself and his fellow beings. The revelation of this law, and the power it exerts, constitutes a fourth order of faculties; whose source is the conscience, which discerns good and evil, merit and demerit, and which unites at once the character of an idea and an affection. Hence we speak of the moral nature of man.

Lastly, man is called upon to form and preserve an order of relations, which crown and regulate all others; relations with the Author of all things, and which unite his present existence with the hopes of another. Hence is derived a kind of motives, destined to exercise a great and serious power over the will; and to which corresponds either a new and infinite development of the faculties of the mind and heart, or, as some think, a special order of interior faculties. Hence we say, man has a religious nature.

The impressions, which belong to the sensual nature, are of two kinds; one springing from each sensation, the other arising indifferently from any of them, and springing from their intensity alone.

The social nature is also twofold. One branch is more general in its nature, constituting our sympathies; in the other, the interest is taken in the pleasures and pains of individuals, considered as such. With these sentiments that unite men, there spring up, moreover, contrary sentiments, setting them in opposition. We may give to the former the general name of love, (though they constitute a very imperfect love). The second sometimes produce a blind antipathy, or a mis-

anthropy, more or less general in its objects, and sometimes appear under the special forms of anger, envy and revenge.

The intellectual nature has also a twofold aspect. When the faculties borrow their motives from the region of the beautiful, they are more liable to *exaltation*; * when, from the convictions of the true, they tend to a severe seriousness.

In the moral nature, we also find two elements. We are led to the accomplishment of the moral law by two kinds of motives, both drawn from the law itself. One proceeds from obligation, for it has an absolute, imperative character, especially in forbidding what is evil. The other proceeds from love, in the most extensive sense of the word, when it denotes an expansive and gentle power, inclining the soul to excellence, and making it earnest for constant improvement.

The religious nature is also, like the others, twofold in its operations. We may feel the entire submission, and unbounded respect, which supreme power, united to sovereign authority, demands; and which the feeling of our weakness and the consciousness of our destiny cherish in His presence, who is the support of the one, and the arbiter of the other; and we may cherish that most august love, which the heart of a creature can conceive; adoration, mingled with gratitude and confidence, finding its true and inexhaustible object in the source of infinite perfection, in the image of an eternal Benefactor!

Thus, there are ten steps, as it were, in this fivefold nature, in the ascent of which man becomes progressively stronger, happier, and better; being gradually harmonized with nature, society, and himself; his wants like his views multiplying and extending, and, what is remarkable, becoming at the same time purified, regulated, and conformed to a plan, whose result is satisfaction and repose.

Those who mistake the path in these regions, which man

* This word has, in this work, the French meaning. It has no English synonyme.

must travel through to his final destination, may doubt of the reality of the higher steps, to which they have not attained, but other travellers have gone before, and their testimony enlightens those who would follow.

Each of the orders of faculties above named, has equally its root in nature ; for all the motives to which they correspond are in nature. Like so many seeds, when considered relatively to their first origin, they are contemporary ; but they are not brought forth and developed with the same rapidity. Some require a more active cooperation on our part ; some are heralds, others are designed to finish. Each higher order requires also, that those below make proper progress, and all together, in the order in which we have arranged them, conjointly prepare, more or less immediately, for the great future, into which our whole existence is to be resolved.

Moreover, although several of these orders of faculties seem to diverge and appear in opposition, when brought to their true tendency, they meet in a common system. Inferior faculties prepare for those which are developed afterwards ; bringing materials and opening a field for their exercise. Higher faculties call forth those which have preceded them, ennobling and making them fruitful. Thus everything is bound together, belongs to a plan, and contributes to progress in a certain degree and proportion.

Perhaps, at first, when the aid these faculties lend each other is considered, they may seem to be confounded. Thus, moralists have sometimes referred the moral faculties to the feelings, sometimes to reason. But attentive reflection will lead us to acknowledge, that consanguinity of principles does not necessarily exclude their diversity, and that the variety and gradual progression of our powers may be reconciled with the essential and fundamental unity of the human being.

In different nations, as in different individuals, any one of these orders of faculties may attain either to an earlier devel-

opement, or to a marked predominance over others; and hence, partly, the diversity in national manners and character. Also, in every individual a similar predominance may be remarked at different periods of life, in different situations. And in proportion to this predominance, we find that we differ from ourselves.

But it is important to remark particularly what is confirmed by constant experience, and will be explained hereafter; that whenever society or the individual remains stationary, or goes backward, it is because the subordination we have just spoken of, has been disturbed; and the reason why man and society go on in continual progress when this subordination is well observed, is, that they follow the path marked out by nature. Another reason why these several orders of faculties should accord and harmonize, is, that, otherwise they are exaggerated and destroy each other. Thus, the development and exercise of the senses may occupy the infancy of individuals, and of nations; but everything goes to ruin and degenerates, when they predominate in manhood. The affections should animate youth; but they excite all the storms of passion, when they reign with too absolute a sway. The intellect sometimes absorbs all the other faculties, as in artists and learned men, and sometimes comes to predominate in society, as in a certain state of civilization, when public morality loses its tone under the influence of the spirit of discussion and analysis. The moral nature also, when it sacrifices the senses and affections too much, withers in a savage sternness, or is lost in mysticism. Indeed, when deprived of the aid of intellect, both the moral and religious faculties go astray, and may convert their power to bless, into baneful poisons.

Considering this system in another point of view, we examine the direction, which the different orders of motives follow, and we discover, that there are two general directions, opposed to each other, but from whose agreement (and they can be mutually balanced), great advantages will result. One direction car-

ries man into himself, and the other carries him beyond himself. And this last is the principle of all generosity. So the globe, that we inhabit, revolves upon itself, while it is drawn by celestial attractions; and, from the revolutions of days and seasons thus produced, flow all the causes of fruitfulness. Self-love appears in every branch of our nature, under different forms, more or less exclusive, imperative and enlightened. We seek repose in the exercise of our senses; we enjoy and become animated in our affections, benevolence and admiration; but we find complete satisfaction only in a nobler and purer sentiment, in the practice of excellence, and in religious thoughts. Now Providence intended, that man should be his own end; not an absolute and superior, but a constant and subordinate end. Self-love is at first evident in his search after objects that are agreeable, for the very perception of self is at first enveloped in outward objects; but this principle is defined more clearly, and acknowledged more freely, in proportion as reflection frees us from this false idea, and renders self a distinct perception.

Self-love seeks satisfaction in three different ways. The first and simplest is in the search after personal good, which we try to attain by seeking the agreeable, and by avoiding the disagreeable, whatever may be their nature and origin.

The second is a search for a more delicate and abstract good, and consists in self-possession and enjoyment. It is a sense of power, which gives a more vivid consciousness; and a consciousness of activity, which gives a keener sense of power; the enjoyment of attention helps us to grant ourselves a keener attention, enabling us to see ourselves better; and, as first we are lost in objects, now we identify and incorporate objects with ourselves by a kind of right of possession; and think ourselves greater, because we have apparently enlarged our boundaries, and recognise ourselves in our possessions.

In the third way of seeking satisfaction, we enjoy what we acquire of real value, our own dignity and improvement; and

not only the exercise and developement of the faculties, but their proper employment, and the harmony which arises from their finding their true destination. We then become conscious of more than personal good or power, we become conscious of happiness.

To consider self-love as merely the pursuit after personal good, is to have a very narrow idea of its energy. But the two last spheres of action are unlimited, and offer a boundless field for the exercise of the passions and virtues.

Self remains almost passive in its first narrow sphere; at least it is only partially active when not guided by reflection. In the two last spheres only does it exercise ~~will~~; in the second, conquering and invading; in the third, becoming truly creative. And it is worthy of remark, that in this higher degree of activity, it alone finds repose, having sought it vainly elsewhere. Self-love is too plain to need definition, but it is not the only principle which guides human will. There are other principles calling us to seek an end beyond self. There are Law and Love; Law addressing severe and imposing words to us, Love persuasive and tender; Law, enlightening and commanding, Love captivating and embracing us. The former is outward and acts on us; the latter, pervading our heart, seems to proceed from within, and taking possession of our being, creates us anew. Law brings us, however, a remedy for the weakness which it brings to light; and Love teaches us the destination of the powers with which it endows us.

But we do not mean by Law, that blind and mysterious force which certain systematic minds have imagined, that they may escape the empire of reason; a force differing but little from material force or fatality, and which they pretend to set in opposition to conviction, and even employ to destroy it. On the contrary, we give to Law its true dignity, basing it upon conviction, from which it derives its character. Law is not necessity, but often contrary to it. Necessity employs coercion, while Law accepts voluntary submission alone. Necessity

sity reigns over matter ; Law, over mind. By Love we understand what is alone worthy of the name—that which unites and consecrates all the powers of the soul, directing them to an object, which alone should draw forth its homage. Love is not inclination simply : for inclination is slavish, while Love is free ; inclination is instinctive, Love reflective, understanding and approving itself.

Self-love is the sole principle of the man, whose will acknowledges no motives but those which address the senses. Love begins to mingle with Self-love, as a principle of action, when the will acknowledges the motives, which the social principle offers. It comes farther to light in admiration ; and Law is involved in the conviction of truth. When the moral faculties are developed, Love becomes manifest, finds its true end, and is cherished by the contemplation and practice of excellence ; and Law breaks forth from the decrees of conscience. And when the religious faculties are brought out in their proper predominance, Law and Love become blended as a principle of action, the former being considered as the will of the supremely perfect Being, and the latter, finding its infinite wants satisfied, and being delivered from uncertainty and limitation.

In these two last regions, however, Self-love is also exercised in combination with Law and Love ; but it takes its most generous form, becoming a search after dignity, improvement, and the happiness for which our Creator has destined us. Thus, Self-love at last harmonizes and unites with generous impulses.

Hence, we find, the principles of human action are, Self-love, Law and Love ; all arising from our nature, and all conspiring to our progress.

CHAPTER III.

AN END.

EVERYTHING in creation has a determinate end. It is man's privilege alone to know his end, to adopt it as the rule of his conduct, and to enter voluntarily into the universal plan.

We have said, that there exist for us two kinds of impulses ; one, proceeding from without, the other, from within. In respect to the former, we are passive, and they seem active, though they possess in reality but an imparted motion ; in the latter only are we really active, for spontaneous impulse alone has energy.

It is because our nature is subject to these two kinds of influences, that we seem to be made up of opposing principles ; and the same being presents the phenomenon of a propensity to yield, and a jealousy of independence. Internal harmony can only be produced, by finding a common regulator.

In yielding to the impulses from without, we may imagine ourselves strong, for being connected with everything, we may shake everything around us ; and, so we may feel our weakness, and often do feel it most, while we are displaying our spontaneous activity : nevertheless, in the latter we acquire true dignity, and take the rank which belongs to us in the scale of being.

The mechanical tendencies of which we are conscious, have no real end : they are merely solicitations. We often give them an end by accepting them unreservedly ; but while unintelligent beings, in pursuing their mechanical tendencies, are unerring, and find the end appointed them, we lose ours by a blind condescension. At least, we suffer the means, which are to conduct us to it, to escape from our hands.

By not giving ourselves up blindly to these tendencies, but by confining them within their limits, we are to discover the

end which they indicate ; while by showing spontaneous activity, we are called merely to acknowledge, approve and accept the end of our being, not to create it. This end is anterior and superior to us ; it is given to us, not as a yoke of necessity, but to receive from us free and reasonable homage ; it is offered to us as a gift and proposed as a model.

An end is where intellect and will meet and unite. The intellect alone can conceive the idea of an end, because this idea is comprised in what does not exist, and because it supposes a comparison of means and a plan. There is an end only so far as there is a mind, that can penetrate into the possible : there is no end without design, or design without order, and order is the creation of intellect.

The will must have reference to an end ; otherwise we may be agitated, but cannot exert our will. The will calls the end from the region of the possible into reality. The will precedes and awakens the intellect by its wants ; and follows and obeys it by its determinations. To perceive an end without aiming at it, or to seek an end without perceiving it, is a contradiction and a discord and the torment of existence ; yet these are too often the conditions to which we condemn ourselves.

In the most simple mechanical labors, before forming the plan of a work, we ask, what is its purpose and use ? And the more clear and complete our conception of the purpose, the better shall we execute the work ; for, from this prime idea will proceed the means to be used. The end is a kind of archetype, which exists in thought, before the hand of the workman brings it into being. The means also must be at the workman's disposal ; and there are other conditions, inherent in the matter, which the workman is to fashion, and relative to the instruments he uses, to his own strength, to the circumstances which surround him, to the interval of time which is granted him : these are possible conditions, and they must be made to harmonize with the intended end. Put aside this idea

of an end, or neglect some of the essential conditions, and there is nothing but confusion and ineffectual effort: motion and strength remain, but there is no more execution, and, perhaps, there will be ruin. Thus it is with the sports of children; they wish to move and exert their strength, but they are unable to conceive an end, and are essentially ignorant of the extent and limitations of their powers. The wise man is the skilful workman; but the most of us are awkward laborers, or children, who sport with life, the most serious of all things.

There is joined to this faculty of spontaneous activity within us, an immense and insatiable desire of exerting it. This desire is imperious in proportion as we exert the faculties of our mind and heart. But if we have not a clear conception of our end we lose it; this impetuous motion of soul becoming but a vague agitation, universal disorder and continued suffering. Thus, being unaccountable even to ourselves, and our transports involuntary, we resemble the traveller, who wanders in the darkness of midnight, who attempts, but cannot undertake anything, whose efforts are without bond or harmony: we have neither foreknowledge nor hope, but uneasiness and error; we are tormented by discontent; and this inward punishment is keenest for the most gifted beings, precisely because they are capable of the greatest things.

We may fail in the idea of an end, if, through want of reflection and light, we see nothing; we may lose it in uncertainty, if, suffering our eyes to wander over all points of the horizon, we see too much. But ignorance of ourselves puts us in the greatest danger of losing our end. There is even a light which may lead us astray; for the illumination may be incomplete.

Sometimes we propose for ourselves an end, which does not exist, or is falsely conceived; or whose conditions are either impossible of themselves, or relatively impossible for us. Sometimes we perceive this impossibility, but it is so far from undeceiving or discouraging us from the chimera we pursue, that it seems to attach us to it more closely than ever, as if by

fatality. We move in a circle; we exhaust and waste our strength, and derive no light; and if we sometimes yield from fatigue, yet we enjoy no repose. This unfortunate state of things often results from our thinking of the past, which is no longer in our power, but which we would recall; or from our invoking the future, which the human condition generally, or our condition in particular, does not require. But oftener still it results from considering only the circumstances of others. We should consider the means, which Providence has granted ourselves; else we become gradually discouraged, the interests of the heart grow fainter with its hopes, and we are condemned to inaction; everything appearing impossible, because we have sought our destiny where it was not to be found.

This disease of the heart may also arise from want of light, as when we do not see the obstacles in our path, or measure the extent of our strength; or from excess of light, as when we transport ourselves into an order of ideas inapplicable to our situation; thus creating wants that cannot be satisfied, especially when they are disproportionate to our virtues and the faculties of our hearts.

This disease may also afflict the most gifted, for they may find in the past, with recollections of nobler things, juster causes of regret; and being more capable of conceiving ideal perfection, may too readily aspire after deceitful hopes, and think themselves worthy of favors which fortune refuses them.

Life must then have an end; and it must be defined, not only for happiness' sake, but for the simple purpose of acting so as to be something. How many precious faculties are lost and wasted, from our not understanding this simple truth, or from neglecting to put it into practice! What sorrow we feel in the evening of life at discovering it too late! Look at that multitude of individuals, who are moving on all sides, who are going and coming, so eager, so impatient, so absorbed! Ask them what they are doing, whither they tend, and what they

desire: who will be able to answer you? Accost those wretches who remain by themselves, overwhelmed with the weight of melancholy; ask them why they appear to refuse the blessings of Providence, and why they do not partake of the banquet of human life? They will answer, they could not find a place at the banquet, but it is because they would not perceive or accept what was offered them.

To say that an end is necessary, is to say that unity of design is necessary. The great art of wisdom is to discern the principal and the secondary ends, and to establish that subordination between them, which will result in harmony. To adopt several ends, successively, is to have no real end; unity of plan, therefore, supposes perseverance.

But is this unity compatible with our nature? How can it be attained amidst so many discordant and heterogeneous elements? When we look upon ourselves we see nothing but confusion and chaos, contradiction and disorder. The great struggle between active and passive man, the origin of which we remarked just now, invades the field of existence and continues during life, composing our whole internal history. This is not all; our sensual inclinations struggle against our affections; both war against our duties; sensual inclinations themselves can only be satisfied at the expense of one another, and the greater their variety the more grievous their discord; all, besides, contribute to our preservation, yet all drive us to destruction by their excess. Some of our passions are mild and tender, others impetuous and violent; rivals of one another, they become reciprocally hostile; reason armed against the heart, pursues, terrifies and wounds it; the heart rises against the reason; imagination wars with judgment; thus discord stalks in among our opinions: and doubt, terrible doubt, furling afar off the horizon of our understanding, would be of itself sufficient to introduce dissension among all our motives. We need occupation and labor, and yet we seek repose; a powerful charm leads us to desire intercourse with men; and a more

irresistible one calls us back to solitude: imitation rules and captivates us almost unconsciously; and yet our independence revolts against it; habit enchains us, yet novelty carries us away! Aspiring to what is most elevated, we conceive and cherish a sublime ambition; falling again below ourselves, we seem to take a savage pleasure in degradation: finally, and above all, self-love and the generosity of devotion contend with each other, one armed with all the power which a fundamental law of our nature gives it, the other, with all the eloquence which the sacred cause of humanity bestows upon it.

But let us glance over the universe, and we shall find innumerable analogies of contrast everywhere, from which results harmony. No power fulfils its destination, without preserving its due limitations, and apparent contrarieties are only reciprocal limits. Such is the picture of our inward self, which certain wise men have called a world in miniature, and an abridgement of the universe.

An unexpected and fruitful peace may spring from this universal war; each of these elements, which threatened destruction, may be brought to its place, subjected to laws and combinations, all resulting at last in perfect order, useful excitement balancing necessary restraint; here provision for amending losses, and there for making conquests; and by the mixture every deadly ingredient may be neutralized. What is this war but the trial of virtue upon earth? too often indeed the cause of its afflictions, but on the other hand, the ground of its triumph, the source of its excellence, and its title to the rewards which await it!

The work of self-education is to imitate the plans of Providence in the whole of creation, and to fulfil them on our own nature. We must, therefore, study the secret of internal harmony in the proportion and importance of the several ends offered to us, and then establish this harmony, by cultivating all our faculties, in a proper subordination of their various orders to each other, and then the unity of the system of our nature will be revealed and manifested completely.

CHAPTER IV.

• LIBERTY.

THERE are two classes of created beings, animate and inanimate: the animate move and impart motion; the inanimate receive motion. Animals have two kinds of motion; one is strictly involuntary, as the motion of the heart, and respiration: the other, by which they come and go and seize objects, acting first upon their own organs, and through them on the external world, is called voluntary; for in this kind of motion the animal takes the character of a spontaneous agent.

• But this volition is mechanical, being entirely subordinate to external causes. The animal does not govern his will; his will is governed by received impressions, and by the instinct, which seeks what is gratifying, and avoids what is displeasing. He *wills*, that he may satisfy his appetite; but he has no reflected perception, or *consciousness* of his appetite or his will. As he does not reflect, he is not aware of the activity he exerts. As he does not know he can choose, he cannot be said to have chosen.

We say an animal is *not free*, when he is prevented from acting, by his limbs being struck with numbness, or because he is bound or confined. We say there is *want of power*, when there are will and organic action, but the object resists the force which is applied to it. The liberty of the animal, therefore, is merely the free play of the organs; the power of moving without constraint. It is not liberty of will, but *liberty of action*, and is the only liberty which a mere animal can have.

Man, as an animal, and before his moral faculties have been called forth, can enjoy only this *liberty of action*. Also, when inclinations come upon him unawares, or subdue him by their

energy ; so that he has neither the time nor power to consult himself ;—he produces certain actions, which being purely instinctive, are blindly determined by the agreeable or disagreeable impressions, that he has received. But his action in this instance is still mechanical, even though he may meet and overcome obstacles.

But a new series of phenomena takes place, when man begins to reflect, and recognizes his command over his organs, and becomes conscious of his will. Then, we find something interposing between inclinations and volition. Inclinations no longer govern the will, but tempt it, and we find man sometimes restraining his desires, and giving them up. In instances where there is entire liberty of action, and where there are no external or internal obstacles to hinder the organs in their play, we see everything remain suspended, as in the presence of a superior power. We see him deliberate and choose whether to act or not ; and we can never predict with certainty what he will do.

Sometimes, also, two different objects beset him, tempting him in different ways ; we see him hesitate, deliberate, and choose between them.

This new kind of liberty is internal ; and it is peculiar to man : nor is it a useless privilege, a mere abstract power. For if the different objects which tempt him, have agreeable or disagreeable sensations for their end, it does not rest with him merely to examine which on the whole is most pleasurable or least painful. This liberty is not merely exercised to suspend his decision, till his reason has finished an examination whose result would inevitably decide him : it is after such an examination, that internal liberty is exercised. The question is not merely one of prudence. To renounce a greater for a lesser pleasure is folly and caprice ; but there is to be a choice as to which is best in itself, and this is to be determined by a reference to the different objects, as being of a different nature, and presenting different

ends, and different motives, urging him in different ways; for instance, the voices of pleasure and of duty.

Greater and less pleasures are homogeneous; and similar weights may be thrown into the balance. But when things are compared which have nothing in common, the same weights will not answer. Pleasures of sense are on the one side; moral pleasures on the other. In the first case, a man would only feel joy or regret according as he chooses well or ill; in the second case, he would experience moral satisfaction or remorse.

Hence, internal liberty acquires all its importance and real exercise, in the presence of moral rules which not merely decide the purposes of man, but make him meritorious or blameworthy. And, hence, moral good is the foundation of true internal liberty, because it gives the only motive for its exercise.

But internal liberty goes farther than the appreciation of motives. When man is hesitating between sensual inclinations and the laws of moral order, he needs to call to his aid the recollected satisfaction of having done well, that he may resist his sensual inclinations. Yet moral satisfaction cannot be paralleled with sensual pleasures, as a magnitude may be compared with a magnitude, and a quantity with a quantity, neither by juxtaposition nor balance. There is no instrument to measure its value, nor language to express it in similar terms. It is always necessary to revert to each order of motives, when there is to be a choice between heterogeneous motives. And man, a mixed being, placed upon the confines of two regions, is called to judge of them in a point of view peculiar to himself. He can, then, moderate or excite his desires and affections: he can fix his attention upon ideas which strike his mind, and thereby render them more clear and vivid; or turn his attention from them, thereby partially annihilating them: he can combine, and transform them, or leave them barren. Thus internal liberty extends so far as to modify in their origin the force of the motives. Thus it is a remarkable fact, that we

sometimes feel on one side sensual pleasures attracting us so powerfully, and on the other, moral satisfactions acting so feebly, that the former overpower us against our will by an instinctive and involuntary force. What is to be done in this case?—our liberty allows us to act upon our inclinations and our ideas; and to temper the former, and modify the latter; to calm external impressions, and revive the sentiment of duty; and we are able to decide with less effort, and to avoid danger.

But as we call to our aid the recollection of moral satisfaction to support ourselves, it is evident, that we must have possessed the liberty of appreciation beforehand; and that we had strength to prefer goodness to pleasure; since we gain the victory over ourselves entirely for this end. We cannot be said to be determined by the preponderance of our inclinations, if we ourselves may change by our reflection, the weights which they put into the balance. In the presence of pleasure and duty, we are free to give new extent and new energy to the motives of duty, or to take from pleasure a portion of its charms. Is not, therefore, the liberty of appreciation the essence of moral liberty?

Some philosophers would explain primitive facts. Insatiable for proofs, and inexhaustible in questions, they desire to account for everything; and will not admit reality, unless supported by an argument. Like the alchemists of old, not content with the gold which may be found in the bowels of the earth, and the sands of rivers, they would turn everything into gold. Hence their chief errors in philosophy, and, especially, their mistakes upon this subject of liberty.

Internal liberty is a primitive fact, which is manifested to inward reflection, like that of thought; which is not demonstrable, but which is seen. The principle of the determination of the will between two or more orders of motives, is within itself: it cannot be elsewhere. The Author of our being has given us the power of discerning different orders of motives, of appreciating, and of choosing between them. This preference

is the supreme act, the decisive point of the will. Here, in the order of nature, we find a cause ; that which transfers the action is not the cause, but an instrument. Cause creates the action freely : and *to will*, if we are not free, is, in fact, mere obedience. The liberty which is found in mechanical freedom, is nothing but that of a lever suspended in the air, waiting for a moving power. In the sanctuary of the soul, where the fire of reason and the principle of moral life burns, and the oracle of conscience is heard, resides true liberty. It cannot be separated from judgment and the sense of duty ; for applying to both, it corresponds to both.

We have said that internal liberty is a primitive fact, manifest to reflection. I feel that I am free to determine, as I feel that at this moment I exist and reflect. Let the reader interrogate himself candidly and attentively, and if he perceives not the same phenomena I am silent, and have nothing to answer.

But what do sophists oppose to this self-evident fact ? Do not their arguments turn in a perpetual circle of hypotheses and metaphors ? As the word liberty serves to express both external liberty, or *liberty of action*, and internal liberty, or volition, they err by the help of a word of double meaning, and think they escape the consequences of their narrow doctrine. But is the captive prisoner in his dungeon deprived of everything, which you honour with the name of liberty, when he meditates committing new crimes, and resolves to pursue his criminal career, if he should ever escape ? Then he is not guilty ; for guilt supposes liberty.

The arm of an assassin is struck with paralysis, at the moment when he was going to pierce the person of his benefactor. He has lost his *liberty of action* ; but is he exempt from crime at the bottom of his heart ?—Yet crime supposes liberty. A generous man would fly to my relief ; he is stopped and chained ; but is there no merit in his action ? Yet merit supposes liberty, and *liberty of action* has been taken away.—Is there not then a deeper liberty ?

You suppose two motives acting with equal or with unequal force, and you prove successfully, by the laws of mechanism, that, in the first case, the will remains suspended, and in the second, that it yields to the most powerful motive. This is very well for material bodies, in which forces are reducible to the expression of motion, and we can compare masses and momenta. But let us not resort to analogy when phenomena have nothing in common. Let us endeavour to furnish ourselves with a measure, a balance, or a coin, which may determine extent, weight, or value, in the estimation of moral motives. But if every way of reducing these different orders of motives to a like expression fail the human mind, let us not say that the will may be determined by a calculation of which it cannot make use. To explain the phenomena of will, you resort to the law of association of ideas, which is only a law of the understanding.

You have recourse to a certain necessity. But this necessity, on nice analysis, is found to be, in the physical order, only the constancy of the laws of nature; and in the metaphysical order, only the certainty of a thing, when the conditions are accomplished. But liberty is one of the primitive laws of nature, in the particular order of phenomena peculiar to thinking beings, resulting from the fact, that there does not exist any anticipated certainty of the action of a moral being, because he is entirely master of his choice.

You say, how can liberty of determination be reconciled with the axiom 'no effect without a cause?' But, supposing that they cannot be reconciled; we will answer, that between an evident and simple fact and an abstract proposition, there is reason to believe it is the last, which, in its abstraction, is not comprehended. But this is a pretended opposition. Without liberty there would be no true causes; liberty alone can give us the idea of a cause. It is precisely because the free agent determines himself, and is not determined by another, that he really produces effect. He does not borrow his cause

from another ; he derives it from himself. He does not obey ; he acts.

Civil liberty is the power of doing what we wish in the social state, without injuring others. Laws, while they protect all individual liberties, give each one limitations as well as securities. This is why those, who see nothing but rights in liberty, and not severe duties correlative to these rights, sacrifice liberty itself. Civil liberty is worthy, indeed, of all our homage ; it is the sister of justice, the source of all improvement, the aliment of all generous affections, the first prerogative of human dignity. But let us learn to appreciate the superior nature of that moral liberty, which is entirely within ourselves, which no power can take from us, which may indemnify us for all other blessings, which we nevertheless too much neglect to exert, hurried away as we are by our own weakness, and placed under that yoke which the passions prepare for us. Let us learn to enjoy and use well this moral liberty ; for without it, civil liberty would be but a vain name ; and the abuse of it would make civil liberty an unfortunate gift.

CHAPTER V.

THE SENSUAL NATURE.

THE senses are gifts of Providence ; and therefore their true exercise must be necessary to the perfection of the human being ; but by the wrong use of liberty the natural harmony of the system is disturbed. The senses, in exercising the functions assigned them, and in their legitimate relations with the other faculties, are of great utility, as the wise and virtuous feel and acknowledge ; and the whole extent of their utility we have not perhaps measured. But when they predominate over more noble faculties, they debase the soul in proportion as they

prevail ; and carry confusion and disorder everywhere. Moralists have seen this disorder ; and they have often concluded too hastily and decidedly upon it ; for they have pronounced a sentence of proscription against its cause ; and instead of regulating, they have wished to destroy the senses,—an excusable error doubtless, since it was Plato's ! but an unfortunate one, for we take from man the possibility of progress, when we lead him from the path of nature, the path which God has marked out.

The function of the senses is to prepare for and introduce the exercise of higher powers. The age of their exercise is the infancy of the human being, and their exercise is a kind of sport, with which nature precludes the education of the human faculties, innocent in itself, and which strengthens, while it amuses, embellishing and animating the scene upon which man is placed : a creature so noble, but so weak, who walks through trial to immortality !

The senses are the guardians of our preservation ; and preservation, being an end of our destination, is a duty.

The senses are the instruments of labor, that great and severe vocation of the human race, whose exercise is the virtue of industry, the frame-work of all other virtues.

The senses furnish materials for one whole branch of our ideas ; and they furnish those signs, which are indispensable to the formation and recall of all our ideas. Perceptible impressions are also necessary to enlighten by contrast, and represent by analogy, that class of ideas, which come by reflection.

The senses serve as supports and excitements to the affections, by furnishing pivots to ideas ; and bringing the elements of language, they afford us the power of creating, preserving and replying to affection. Besides, merely in creating our relations with external nature, they are the instruments of our intercourse with our fellow beings.

The senses serve as a useful counterpoise to exaltation in sentiments and ideas.

The senses are also the keys of that great temple of nature, in which the august image of the Creator is to be revealed to human reason.

In short, even in the very tendency, which sensible impressions have, to usurp the whole being, to distract us from a more elevated calling, to pervert our other inclinations, and to lead astray self-love, by disturbing the general economy of our being; even when blindly abandoned to themselves, they are, in the plans of Providence, all eminently useful: for it is in the struggle they engage us in, which is as lasting as life, and as general and frequent as the objects with which we are surrounded, that the good man is to gain the glory and merit of triumph, his true dignity and true happiness; because it is from struggle that the morality of his actions results. If the senses be useful to us in certain respects as allies, they are still more so as adversaries; and even the just reproaches which moralists apply to them, show how necessary they are in their very hostility. This continual exercise of the soul is the strengthening discipline, from which man draws his power to do good, and accomplish all great and generous purposes.

Such are the senses in their natural and legitimate rank, and in their relations with superior faculties.

Let us try now to consider man, such as he would be, if he stooped to derive the motives of his conduct from the senses alone. It is but an hypothesis, to be sure, realized only in some few instances; but it will serve to aid our conception of the trouble and disorder, which the senses may bring into the system, in proportion to the undue predominance which they may chance to have. This hypothesis is, besides, nothing but the very theory of some philosophers, and which they pretend to give us as the faithful portrait and history of human nature.

Let us suppose a man endowed with all the intellectual faculties, but compelled to draw from perceptible impressions instead of from the faculties of the heart, his sentiments and his morality; and to seek, in the objects of the senses, the only

ends of his earthly existence : he would have two spheres ; one the pains and pleasures belonging to each particular sensation ; the other, the pains and pleasures derived from the degree of intensity, which any sensation whatever may acquire. In the first of these two spheres, he would remain entirely passive ; in the second, he would begin to co-operate with outward impressions, by a more or less marked reaction. He would have, and there would be for him but one principle of determination : mere personal feeling. He would have but one interest : to seek these pleasures and to avoid these pains. Every other consideration would be secondary, subordinate and relative to this arbitrary interest. What then would there be for him ? In the past, regret for lost pleasures, and perhaps the solace of past troubles ; in the future, some possible but uncertain joys, whose sphere would contract from day to day, and inevitable pain, more or less severe and prolonged ; his hopes would have limits ; but would his fears ?

The supreme beauty would be to him the pleasure which arises from surprise, and consists in the mere brilliancy of colors. In images of order, he would see a merely mechanical utility ; in harmony he would feel none of the chords, which enrapture us, and truth itself in his opinion would have a mercenary value and no other. In other men he would see what he sees in all the objects of nature ; only his instruments, or the obstacles to his personal interest. But as they are endowed like him with intelligence and will, he would be obliged to make them subservient to his use, by conviction, seduction, or force. When he sees his equals happy, can he feel anything but envy ? When they suffer, can he feel anything, but that he does not suffer like them ? except, perhaps, he may feel a contrast, which will render his personal pleasures more keen. What motive can prevent him from being cruel, if it were his interest to be so ? What can be his regret at the sight of a victim ? He will only rejoice, that there is one who can no longer injure him. If he be resisted, or if he be importuned with his complaints, he will

only be irritated. Though his equals have their eyes fixed on him, he cannot aspire to glory, for he neither understands admiration nor esteem. He may however find some aliment in the triumphs of vanity, for though applause cannot stimulate merit, it may increase his strength, and he might use it as a new power, and therefore he may endeavour to obtain it.

Let us extend our hypothesis and admit, that he might live in the midst of men, who are endowed with those faculties of the heart, to which he is entirely a stranger; he could not understand in others, affections of which he is himself incapable; but he would judge of their effects with all the sagacity of an egotism which would profit by everything; he would study the means of obtaining affection; and not being able to find those, which the heart inspires, he would seek those which his own experience suggests; he would employ cunning; he would suppose the affections might be bought. Nor must he necessarily be free from malevolence, when unable to love: inaccessible even to gratitude, there would remain the power of hating, for it is sufficient for hatred, that another man is an obstacle, though it is not sufficient for love, or for gratitude, that he is a docile instrument. .

We grant to this unfortunate being all the privileges of the position, in which our hypothesis has placed him: he will experience the solitary pleasure, which a man feels in the exercise of his own activity; a pleasure which consists in a more vivid conception, or consciousness, of his existence; but we are obliged also to admit his necessity of activity, and the consuming inquietude, which arises from it, when it cannot be satisfied. His desires can have no other bounds than fatigue and impotence, and they may survive them also. What then must be the principle of this insatiable activity? impatience for change, ambition for power, the torments of vanity and pride, for he will not even conceive of elevation. This is the region which that author * has explored with a rare talent, who would have been an estimable philosopher, if, in his paintings,

* La Rochefoucauld.

he had pretended only to exhibit an example of a too frequent degradation, merely to inspire a just horror of that selfishness, which disinherits man of all generous affections; but who is an unfaithful painter, nay, a calumniator of human nature, when he pretends to give as a general law, what is only an accidental perversion; and who is a dangerous moralist, when tracing such pictures with such nonchalance, he dares not express, nay, when he does not let us suspect,—the indignation of his soul against these effects of egotism, of which he offers us the frightful image.

What an existence is that of this solitary self, shut up in the gloomy dungeons of egotism, surrounded by an inanimate nature, and hearing no friendly and responsive voice! What would the code of morality be to such a man?—a difficult and vast calculation of personal interest. But would the sensual man always discover it? and when he did, would he always embrace it, and sacrifice the present, which he possesses, to a doubtful future? Would not the imagination mingle any delusion with his hopes and fears? Let us request an answer from the experience of each day. What an immense variety of objects attract and repel us on all sides! What a prodigious variety of shades in the impressions produced upon us! What confusion, what chaos in those various solicitations, which urge us in every sense! How many errors, how many mistakes we make before we gain experience! When we attain the difficult knowledge of what will contribute to personal welfare, is not life passed, and a hopeless tomb open to receive us? Let us admit still more: let us grant to this man the notion of an author of all things; let us try to create in him a kind of worship, which may conform to his ideas! How will he conceive of the Supreme Being?—as a sovereign who is powerful and strong. He can do no more, he cannot even conceive of him as just. What relations will he bear with his Creator? he can conceive of pains, of pleasures, but not of the celestial emanations of his kindness, and will seize at a venture, upon all

which, in his opinion, may attract the equally capricious favor or displeasure of this terrible power. How will he imagine a future existence ; sensual as his present existence ? he will desire its pleasures, but only as pleasure ; he will deprecate its sufferings, but cannot rise to the idea of *punishment* ; and to avoid pain and secure pleasure, he will make a mercenary calculation ; wishing to buy that future, which he is incapable of deserving.

But let us still observe him. The farther the circle of his ideas extends, the more will increase the disproportion and discord between the faculties of his mind and heart. Moreover, the faculties of his mind want a stimulus, when deprived of the energy which the sentiments of the soul lend them. The habit of passiveness to which the servitude of sensible impressions condemns him, will plunge him inevitably into a kind of lethargy. The spur of vanity may awaken him, and he may find in a mercenary interest some spring for his thoughts ; and become skilful, perhaps, in studying the surface of our universe, and applying to it the material instruments of technical operations. But whence may he draw the inspiration and light, which can introduce him into the sphere of the most fruitful ideas ? What creation in the fine arts is possible for him, who cannot admire ? What knowledge of human nature can he have, who knows not how to love ? To him the heaven is closed ; the earth alone is open, but open as a tomb.

This is man, such as he is when confined to the motives that address the senses, and disinherited of the patrimony to which the first order of faculties should have entitled him ! If there escape from him unconsciously some generous emotion against his will, he would, if faithful to his cause, condemn it as an error ; and, if he pretended to give the name of morality to this course of conduct, which he has adopted, he must condemn the act of disinterested devotion as a crime ; for he would only see in it the violation of the sole legitimate end of his being. This is the sensual man ! this is that desert, that

gloomy night, where he vegetates and is trained ! We have not imagined or exaggerated ; we have hardly glanced at the frightful solitude, the savage state into which man can descend, when he puts aside the noblest faculties of his being ; a state towards which he approximates, whenever he suffers his inclinations to prevail over his duties. The necessary state of the sensual man is this abyss, which we must contemplate, in order to avoid it the more entirely.

CHAPTER VI.

THE SOCIAL NATURE.

WITH the affections a new principle is developed in man ; and, though troubled with storms, how many charms and delights, how much animation, and what extension of thought, does this part of our nature involve ! In the sensual nature everything is determinate, circumscribed, and attached to times and places ; but pains and pleasures, hopes and fears are all vague and indefinite, and everything seems illimitable in the social nature. The soul, delivered from the narrow prison, where the senses hold it, expands, rushes forth, and, perhaps, wanders away, carried along by wants which it cannot define. Self is relieved of its own weight, under the influence of this new principle. Confined to the motives, that address the senses, man would remain solitary in the bosom of creation, no echo answering to the voice of his heart ; but under the influence of the affections all nature is peopled and awake for him ; intelligent beings really exist for him, only when his affections discover and embrace them : then his being is multiplied ; he understands others, and is understood by them ; the social affections awake and fill the world.

The tender and impassioned enter with joy on this their life, which swallows up their whole being. But let them consult their experience, and say, if it be sufficient to itself? O no. The affections are only immortal, when they are felt as a preparation for higher modes of existence; the germ will increase and fructify, only when it receives the influences of the most elevated motives; and otherwise will wither. This germ, whose buds are sympathy, and whose flower is benevolence, is generosity; a true vital element, an expansive power, which, breaking the narrow barriers of self-love, first teaches man, that there is an end without himself.

Sympathy is connected with an intellectual phenomenon, as curious as it is vast in its results; we mean, with the association of ideas. It is by virtue of this association, that the images of pleasure become a personal enjoyment, and those of pain, a personal suffering, which we seek to relieve. Thus, self-love continues to play a considerable part in sympathy. Yet even when developed by the association of ideas, this principle is not enough to explain even sympathy; the first degree of affection. One proof of it is, if we found in sympathy nothing but personal suffering, we should have a way of relieving ourselves more direct, simple and easy than to relieve others, which would consist in avoiding the expressions of pain, and consequently, the presence of the suffering being; there would be horror and terror only, at the sight of suffering, and not pity; and yet sympathy attaches us to the afflicted and inspires us with an imperious desire of flying to their relief: horror and fright sometimes seize us, but pity prevails, conquers, and drives them away. If we found in sympathy mere personal enjoyment, we should sympathize much more with the joys of others than their pains; the former would be those alone, to which we should consent to be witnesses; yet the contrary happens: there is then something more in this emotion of the heart than personal feeling; we are no longer limited to personal inclinations; self no longer continues to be an exclusive centre; there is a

relation, a sentiment of two persons, two terms, distinct from one another, although bound together ; we are really transferred into another ; it is his pain and his pleasure which we feel, and we conceive them as being in him, although re-echoed within ourselves ; sympathy opens to us a direct communication with a being, who is not ourself, but who is equally intimate ! It is a mysterious and touching power, which multiplies our existence infinitely, and may have suggested to the sages of antiquity the hypothesis of a universal soul ; it is that very aggrandizement of our being, which an ignorant person seeks with so much ardor ; in vain struggling against the ramparts of matter, and only acquiring a brute force ! It is this concert of so many millions of voices, which call upon and respond to each other from the ends of the earth ; this holy alliance of humanity, which renders blessings and evils common, and interests all in the destiny of each ; this wealth of the heart, which can appropriate to itself the joys of others, discover the value of its own joys by sharing them, and draw even from grief an inexpressible and sublime sweetness, by shedding the tears of pity ; this ingenious economy of Providence causing the association of ideas and a combination of self-love to concur ; which opens the brazen gates of egotism, and works out the difficult passage from self-love to the love of others, by interesting us in the welfare of our equals, without our ceasing to have regard to self.

Sympathy is excited and nourished by the analogies and contrasts of situations and characters. But contrasts and analogies must be united ; the individual would be frozen in presence of an exact copy of himself, while he is repulsed, if he finds nothing in common with himself. Besides, all contrasts are not equally favorable to sympathy ; there are some which paralyze it. The contrasts, which attract sympathy, are those in which there is a superabundance on one side and want on the other ; that is, those which invoke reciprocal generosity, and this is a proof, that sympathy springs from generosity ; and thus

is explained the necessity of both contrasts and analogies. Contrasts are necessary, that individuals, having something to give one another, communication may be useful ; analogies, that it may be possible. Thus there is generosity in sympathy, but it comes to its full height, and into its own proper form in the sentiment of benevolence. This is the second degree of the affections ; there is certainly something more in a pure emotion of benevolence, than in sympathy. Sometimes also sympathy has its origin in love.

Sympathy would relieve ; love would do more, it wishes to rob itself. Sympathy finds enough in the happiness of others ; love delights to become the cause of happiness. A look is sufficient to express sympathy ; love desires to sacrifice. Sympathy is correspondence with another, love is forgetfulness of self. Sympathy needs the presence of its object to be excited, love increases in absence ; it increases if condemned to survive. Sympathy awaits impressions ; love seeks, pursues, flies ; thirsting to give. Sometimes indeed love reposes and contemplates the cherished object, satisfied with seeing and loving ; but returning to itself, it no longer finds the former self, but another existence, another self, or rather it says, *self* no more ; this cold expression has no sense to it ; it needs another language, which the affections alone can comprehend. The consciousness of individuality seems to be effaced and to disappear ; the heart corresponds and communes only with the all-absorbing object it has chosen.

If this boundless flight is directed towards a finite, and perishable creature, it must be restrained. This sensibility must be preserved from an excess, which may render it guilty of a kind of suicide. When this veil is raised, and such prospects are opened ; and this animated scene, this motion, this interest succeeds to the cold region the mere senses afford ; man ceases to see material objects, or if he does still see external nature, it is under another aspect. Perhaps now sensible impressions will be necessary to restrain the impetuosity which carries him away.

The benevolent affections are a preparative to the admiration of the truly beautiful, to the instructions of conscience, and to religious emotions. At this stage of developement, nature, through the happy instinct which regulates it, suggests to man a part of the actions, which morality will afterwards prescribe for him, and disposes him to become unconsciously good. This instinctive goodness will have little merit, but society will reap its fruits as it has watered its germs. The state of society is a state of nature. Society is the grand vocation of nature for man. Without it he would never truly become a man. It is to the faculties of his heart, what the material universe is to his senses.

Were man reduced to act from the motives that address the inferior faculties, society would be merely a coalition of interests, which, hostile from rivalry, and egotistical in their associations, could have no bond but the rigorous calculation, which measures the exchange of services, and no end but personal advantages, which, indeed, each would find more abundant from combination of forces. But a new interest is formed under the influence of the affections; reciprocation is established without being forced; devotion to others, which cannot be bought, takes the place of an avidity, which nothing could satisfy: this is the social interest.

Doubtless self-love continues to exist and act in this new region; it can never be abandoned by man, since it is a condition of his nature; but it takes another and an unexpected form; it is combined and commingled with devotion to others. Man, under the influence of new motives, delights in loving and sacrificing, and places himself in the service of generosity. In his sacrifices he enjoys a recompense, which selfishness denied.

We may observe in all communities, instituted by affection, the bond is stronger in proportion as the beings it unites, have more need of one another; the affections seem to seek of themselves a theatre, where they can show themselves most gener-

ous; the sphere in which they are spread, enlarges in a progressive manner, as if to prepare the heart to love more, in proportion as it learns to love. Filling the bosom of a family as their first sanctuary, the affections begin to be exercised in obscurity, and then become capable afterwards of embracing society, of which a family is the element and image. The most entire, intimate and perfect union is the conjugal. What a touching and beautiful symbol in our social institutions is that custom, which gives one name to two companions, thus united upon earth, as if to indicate, that hereafter they are not only to have the same habitation and patrimony, but also the same sentiments, hopes and life! Nature, which formed this noble alliance, is moved at its approach, and as she is decked with flowers and surrounded with perfumes, when she sets forth her most beautiful works, so, preparing for the most touching of festivals, she sends love in peculiar tenderness to adorn the best period of life, and to serve as a herald and precursor of sacred marriage. In this union there is the happiness not only of loving and giving reciprocally, but of a common devotedness and of receiving also, by means of a second bond springing from the first, which attaches a new generation to it. Reciprocal protection of husband and wife, of parents and children, of brothers and sisters,—this is the family. A series of communities are formed around the family, like so many concentric circles, in all of which there are wants, and in all, generous affections, that come forth to meet wants. Family, country, the whole human race, call by turns upon individual self-sacrifice, and upon an extension of the domestic affections; as they are themselves so many successive families, under a more general form. Patriotism is an instinct before it becomes a virtue; it is called forth by public dangers; the necessity of sacrifice kindles instead of extinguishing it. In the midst of these different relations, which spread on all sides, some more intimate alliances are formed of individual to individual, as if to keep alive the affections, and render the heart capable of supplying so many relations. The alliance we call friendship, reanimates

affection continually by concentrating its energy on individual objects. This is also instinctive, the fraternity of sympathy; but this sympathy is not only the effect of analogy, but also of contrasts. To need to be united, we must also need to render mutual aid. In this common intercourse each one is enriched by what he receives, and still more by what he gives. Thus, in the order of sentiments developed in this first school of nature, paternal love represents authority; filial love subordination; fraternal love justice, and all these various alliances going on as it were before laws, prepare for public by private morality, and lead from one to the other. But in order that this power of natural sentiment should accomplish its destination, it must be carried out into that morality to which it leads, and of which it is the prelude. It is by unfolding itself in morality, that sensibility will be understood, and find a new energy by finding its sphere sufficiently enlarged. The sensibility of the heart needs morality, as sensation needs reflection, that its fruits may ripen.

But whence come the malicious passions? Affection is simple and direct, hatred is complicated and relative. Hatred is a war between self-love and the better inspirations of nature; hatred is an invasion or resistance. It is also commonly directed towards what is more elevated, rather than to what is below us. The violent man seems to enjoy a kind of barbarous pleasure in oppressing weakness, because he feels that the innocence of the victim accuses and condemns him. All antipathy is a want of generosity;—the repugnance of the rich to the poor in all kinds of poverty, is not only the secret refusal of selfishness, but a revolt against pity. Selfishness repels everything that might rob it; and especially what would rob it of the prerogatives which vanity attributes to itself, by dissipating the illusions on which vanity is founded. It is true that the affections themselves, by instituting separate communities in the bosom of society, carry into them a kind of collective selfishness; self-love, which was merged in the alliance, reappearing

upon its confines and becoming again hostile to the interests which are placed out of its inclosure; and it is more exacting perhaps than before, because it is more easily justified in its own eyes and takes the semblance of generosity itself. This is one way that we espouse hatred and inherit vengeance; society is tormented by the spirit of party and clan, and mankind are torn by national animosity. Selfishness pursues the war which it has undertaken against the sacrifices of the heart, through the field of the affections; after having kindled discord between individuals, kindling it between families. Corrupting the affections, and setting its seal upon them, it becomes strengthened by their means.

The affections are apt to degenerate and become occasions of trouble, in proportion as they are more exclusive; they become more innocent and beneficent in proportion as they are more general. There are some beings who consider the love of mankind as an abstraction and a renouncement of the private affections; and they are doubtless right in so far as they apply this supposition to beings who resemble themselves.

It is true that the more a particular affection becomes excited, the more it tends to become exclusive, for the human heart can absolutely have but one centre; but the individual affections would be the means of rendering them more true and fruitful. The question arises, what is the measure of an individual affection; and this is determined by that of the devotion which may be useful to the beloved object; but this measure is not in the instinct of the affection itself merely, which is vague and indefinite in its nature. The light of duty must direct us and offer the rule of proportions.—Reason and experience alone, will be insufficient to give an adequate guide to the emotions of the heart; it is natural to these emotions to be indocile to the counsels and even to corrupt the judgments of reason.

Let us suppose man limited to his affections alone, which can never be absolutely realized; and to which there are not so many

approaches among men, as there are approaches to a life of mere sense. There is something animated in the exercise of the affections, as there is something stationary and lethargic in the sensual life: the former has then in itself a progressive tendency. The affections, besides, are so vivid a presentiment of morality, that they give it an anticipated power over us; but for the same reason it is also more common to see the affections usurp a larger part than belongs to them in the economy of our nature, and among estimable persons; for it is more difficult to stop ourselves seasonably in the movements of sensibility, than to condemn ourselves to perfect indifference, because they are absorbing as well as delightful, and because we excuse ourselves for this excess by the sanction that morality itself gives to the disinterestedness which is in the soul, approving most actions which result from the affectionate heart. It is in this way that the noblest feelings are sometimes those which make us commit the greatest faults. We think we are virtuous as soon as our hearts beat with sympathy and generous sentiments; we disdain, and put away those positive precepts which seem cold, compared to our emotions, not remembering, that an excess is possible in self-forgetfulness, or at least deciding that such an excess is excusable. The man who, in the course of his developement, could go no farther than the motives by which the affections are developed, and who is unable to rise to the region, where conscience reigns, could better and more easily conceive religion than the sensual man. He would represent the Divinity to himself as mere infinite power no longer, but also as infinite beneficence; yet he could not represent to himself the Supreme Being as a legislator, a judge and a remunerator. The worship of the sensual man degenerates into a sort of *feticism* which materializes the Supreme Intelligence; the worship of the man of mere affections degenerates into a kind of *anthropomorphism*, which, by endowing the Deity with the instinctive affections, gives him also caprices, errors, and all human passions. Eager for continued exist-

ence, struggling with terror against that which takes from him the objects of his tenderness, man ardently invokes that immortality which alone can restore them to him ; but he does not seek in it that better future where truth and virtue will triumph. His religion perhaps bears some relation to the extravagant ideas of certain modern mystics, for whom religious sentiments are rather a search after exquisite enjoyment, than a rule of conduct or an aid to practice.

CHAPTER VII.

THE INTELLECTUAL NATURE.

THE faculties of the understanding and the will constitute two different orders, and to philosophy they may be the objects of two distinct studies ; but intellect and will, having a common seat and acting upon one another in a thousand different ways, cannot be separated.

Therefore, when we investigate the laws and operations of the human mind, we must observe how our affections and inclinations modify the course of our ideas ; and when we investigate the laws of our sensibility, we must observe how our ideas modify the determinations of our will. The latter is our present subject of investigation.

We say that the intellect has its wants and enjoyments ; but there must be beforehand, aspirations after the treasures which the intellect procures ; and those noble desires are so many solicitations which excite the intellect to exercise, and to innumerable operations of which it is the wonderful instrument ;—and they also reward the efforts of the mind, being antepasts of what the mind is ultimately to procure and enjoy.

Curiosity is the first spur of intellect, but it often finds itself

disappointed, being blind. A more noble term would be necessary to express the thirst for the beautiful and true, which always springs from the soul's having tested their charms. The enjoyment of truth and beauty, (or admiration), though essentially contemplative, gives a great impulse to the powers of the soul, inspiring an ardent desire to reproduce the objects of enthusiasm.

When the mind is thus moved, we say it has intellectual life, a life which predominates in the learned, the literary, the artist; filling the hours consecrated to study, mingling with labors apparently material, with social intercourse, and with our very pleasures; a life introducing us into a region of light, and filling us beside with deep emotions, but not without agitations and pains of its own.

The beautiful and the true are in some degree identical. But though the beautiful must be supported upon the true, it can be contented with an imperfect truth; it requires verisimilitude, not only to favor the illusion, but for still another and deeper reason, because there is no beauty without order, and unlikelihood is intellectual disorder, a clashing of images among themselves, or a struggle of the judgment against images.

The beautiful is an introduction to the true, its twilight; a sweet messenger, preparing us for real and serious study. Thus the arts are to science what games are to labor; not only a salutary diversion, but a real preparation.

The difficulties of the theory of beauty, the mistakes of many philosophers, especially the errors of the vulgar, arise from the fact, that common language gives the denomination of beauty to many perceptions, which are not true beauty, but which only have analogies with it more or less incomplete and fugitive. As the beautiful satisfies the intellect and gives it repose, we have thought we might give the name of beautiful to whatever procures satisfaction and repose, and have admitted an artificial beauty, which is the mere product of habit or custom or even of caprice.

Habit is a mechanical law, and therefore imperitive; and, often assuming the semblance, takes the place of truth in the intellect. What coincides with the habits of our minds, obtains our approbation, and seems regular and even harmonious to us, things appearing to us in their places when they accord with our own dispositions, which themselves are not natural, perhaps, but such as we have fashioned them by our practice. What deranges our habits, on the other hand, troubles, restrains, thwarts, and thus displeases us; and not complaining of ourselves, but of objects, we accuse them of being deformed, because they do not bear any relations to our artificial being.

Custom produces, through the power of imitation, an effect of the same kind as habit; enslaving the mind to certain maxims and instituted rules, whose origin has escaped our investigation, and which prejudice exalts into absolute laws.

Besides these two orders of artificial disposition in the understanding, one of which has a character of constancy, the other of generality, more or less extended,—there are other artificial dispositions peculiar to every individual, depending on his temperament, his temper, the circumstances of the moment; and they are as various and varying as their causes. On account of these, what suits the intellectual situation of some, does not suit others; what suits one moment does not suit the next; and the beautiful appearing uncertain, and changeable, is perceived and judged by the relations it bears to capricious individuals.

The beauty which results from surprise alone, is imperfect; and belongs, as we have seen, simply to sensual nature. Being the attribute of novelty, it is found in a different direction from the beauty which springs from habit and custom. How can we reconcile impressions whose causes appear so contradictory?

The impressions which arise from habit and custom, are the result of association of ideas; those which arise from surprise, are often founded on isolated perceptions, and are produced

by the vivacity, which novelty gives them. As there is in the mind a need of repose, so there is also a need of excitement, and the impressions of habit answer to the one, and those of surprise to the other. For the mind not only clings to the past, but is impatient for the future, and surprise is the herald of an unknown future. There is, however, in habit, something which weighs upon us and burdens us; and those surprises whose conditions trouble and confuse our minds, displease us. Besides, the beauty which is derived from surprise, is not only false, but must necessarily be most uncertain and transient, depending upon accidental circumstances, and disappearing, as soon as it begins to exist, from the same cause which gave it existence. Permanence would be its death.

The kind of charm, also, which springs from a conformity to our habits, to custom, or to our individual caprices, has nothing in common with the sentiment of the beautiful; so far from being admiration, it closes the mind to admiration and extinguishes it. It may obtain a great influence, but there is nothing lofty enough in it to inspire enthusiasm. It never supposes in objects anything universal or steadfast, but its conditions are exclusively in ourselves. This last observation applies also to emotions of surprise, when surprise is only the effect of novelty: besides, surprise is never admiration, although it may mingle with it. We are more astonished, perhaps, at what we dislike, than at what we like. Strangeness is sufficient to excite astonishment; while there is in the beautiful something which is homogeneous, awakening a kind of vague reminiscence.

But surprise often leads to the beautiful by exciting attention, which leads to comparisons that awaken the ideas of the beautiful; yet it is worthy of remark, that surprise is generally more vivid in proportion to the previous inattention. It is, however, the signal of grandeur, one of the elements of the truly beautiful; and which, when united to order, the other element, produces perfection of beauty, although either gran-

deur or order, taken alone, is sufficient to give reality to the beautiful.

The notion of grandeur is relative, but there is also in it something positive which serves as a foundation to the relation. A material object has a decided dimension, having an extension respectively larger or smaller than another object, and this relation is deduced from the comparison we make. The object, also, possesses a magnitude relative to the spectator : but there is independently of the spectator and of the variable measure he finds within himself, another primitive, independent, absolute measure—infinity. The intellect, unable to conceive this infinity, knows only its negative conditions, and determines them by the suppression of all limits ; but something in the soul conjectures and invokes it, and the intellect refers to it the objects it contemplates, and the soul delights to approach the boundary to which it aspires.

To measure what is greater than ourselves produces astonishment ; to perceive what is great is the suppression of a limit, a step towards infinity, and the commencement of admiration ; and the proof of this is, that in admiration we raise ourselves as it were to the height of the object and grow great with it. We admire more the higher we are placed, we are more astonished the smaller we are. There is then in the admiration of grandeur the revelation of an end, proposed to our nature, which it will always pursue, without ever absolutely attaining, but to which it can feel itself more or less near, and whose approach causes an ineffable joy. Hence the emotions which arise from the sight of what is vague and indefinite, and which spring, not only from the presence of greatness of dimension, but especially from the greatness of power, to which dimension serves as an expression and image, assisting us to measure energy by sensible effect.

Thus grandeur, by becoming an element of the beautiful, takes the character of majesty. And though in the admiration for what is majestic, there is doubtless a considerable part

claimed by self-love, the pleasure caused is not ignoble ; it is much superior to the gross food self-love subsists on, when no motives are felt but those which address the senses. The pleasure we feel in the contemplation of majesty flows from our participation in it, appropriating it to ourselves as we do, by the power of intellect.

There is also in this admiration a disinterested principle, although it is more difficult to discover it ; a kind of worship for that ideal infinity which grandeur suggests, and of which it is a detached ray. In feeling our inferiority, we certainly do not admire ourselves, but something superior to us. All enthusiasm has something essentially generous in it, and in the impression which majesty produces, is an anticipation of that respect which Law inspires.

This is what renders the images of grandeur so imposing. What is truly great is not only stronger than we are, but we suppose in it something better. We might be terrified, but terror would not be admiration ; we are captivated, and submit voluntarily. However, this is rather the shadow of Law, than Law itself.

Between order and grandeur there is always something common ; for grandeur acknowledges a principle of unity, and order permits us to embrace a greater mass of objects, giving them a kind of continuity and bringing them near by means of what is analogous in them.

The idea of order is the exclusive privilege of intellect ; by which alone it can be created, perceived, and imagined. As an effect, it manifests the action of intellect, and consequently attests its presence, or passage ; as instrument, it serves for all its operations ; and as cause, it puts it in play. It is not only the result of comparison, but of that reference to unity, the idea of which the intellect acquires only through itself. Order, then, which the great Leibnitz has so judiciously characterised, as *unity in variety*, that principle of all knowledge, source of all harmony, regulator of all proportions, arbiter of custom, has

something real in itself, being not only a relation of objects with us, but a relation among themselves, which we can appreciate and know. Order is, as it were, the soul and essence of the beautiful, and becomes the sublime by being associated with grandeur. Charmed with the presence of order, we attach ourselves to it ardently, and, satisfied with seeing it always, forget ourselves in contemplation. Is it possible that among philosophers there can be found men, so inattentive to the phenomena of the internal world, or so prejudiced by their theories, as to pretend that such a beauty is only the disguised transformation of utility, and that the admiration of it is merely a profound calculation of self-love? And can it be that they have gone so far as to seek that utility, from which beauty receives its value, and of which it is the instrument, in the enjoyment of the senses merely. Are not the emotions, which the appearance of the beautiful excites, more real, vivid, and pure, in proportion as the sentiment of the beautiful is more entirely disinterested? Not only sordid calculations of self-love do not mingle with this admiration, but they destroy it if they appear. The perfectly beautiful dwells in what we cannot turn to any use. It is the pleasure of selfishness to destroy, that it may use; it is the pleasure of admiration to preserve, and it respects in order to preserve. If the beautiful received its character from leading to profit, profit itself would necessarily be the most beautiful. If it received its character only from utility, value would be in proportion to utility, and the masterpieces of genius would yield to the cold treasures of avarice. We may seek beauty in the sensations, which are most useful, as in taste; or in the instruments, which are used to satisfy the most pressing wants of life; but we find it elsewhere, in the simple violet, in the lily of the valley, as well as in the starry heaven, and melodious concert. The young virgin is most truly beautiful to the chaste eye; and all real beauty is wrapt in a kind of virginity, which, like a consecrated veil, forbids the profanation of enjoyment. The admiration which the sight of order as an element of beauty, in-

spires, is an essentially generous sentiment. It is a love free from return, a special and primitive faculty of our soul, the leaning towards an end, placed in the sphere of thought, which we shall be happy to attain even by sacrifices: it is much more than a subtle and prudent calculation, it is a direct sentiment which may penetrate and fill all the capacity of our being.

This sentiment is an enjoyment doubtless, but the question is to know what is the object and aliment of this enjoyment: to define sentiment as enjoyment is not an answer.

Order doubtless is eminently useful, but we admire before seeing its utility. Let us give thanks to Providence for this inward attraction, by which we are unconsciously led to the best methods of exercising our intellectual activity, the most fruitful of our powers. It is true that general utility is an element of the beautiful, but not the utility of selfishness; and as the first is liberal, the maxim is confirmed instead of being enfeebled.

There are different kinds of beauty, for there are relations between sensations, between the affections, and between simple ideas. There are relations also between the laws of morality and our sentiments and actions, and hence arises a beauty of a more elevated rank.

The beauty which is peculiar to the arts of the imagination, unites the impressions of the senses and the affections of the heart, making the former serve to express the latter, and the latter to verify the former; thus the intellect receives a tribute from the senses, and gives back to them a charm and dignity they did not possess before. What does not sensible nature become, under the pencil of the painter, or animated by the harmony of the poet? The intellect receives still more from the sensibility of the heart, and renders still more to it: it receives that eloquence, which animates the fine arts; and in return learns to know itself.

CHAPTER VIII.

ON THE SENTIMENT OF THE TRUE.

THE pleasures of the beautiful lend a charm to the youth of the mind ; Truth nourishes its maturity : and as the sentiment of the beautiful is a herald of the enjoyment of the true, so is order its prelude and its halo, making it clear.

Order participates directly in the first kind of truths, which form the tissue of mathematical theorems and abstract propositions, which come into all the branches of our knowledge, as so many transforming instruments. But there is another kind of truths, to which philosophers give the name of objective truths, comprising the arts gained by external observation, or revealed by inward conscience ; they are the echo of nature to the interrogations of science, or the more hidden but more eloquent oracle, which responds to the invocations of wisdom. From the harmony of truth in itself, results a kind of order, the most majestic which the human mind can conceive. Truth thus becomes beautiful, and its charms, although more severe, are partly borrowed from the same source as those of the arts. But it has also a power peculiar to itself, which finds in our soul sentiments corresponding to it. Evidence is not merely addressed to our intellect, it penetrates and fills our soul : diffusing calmness, serenity, and joy, exercising over us an irresistible but gentle power, which we cannot openly brave, though we may evade it by mental artifice, turning away from its effect, when we cannot resist it.

In these phenomena is manifested Law, a voice superior to and independent of us, and which shines out in the power of evidence in all its brightness and in its first complete application. Evidence exercises no external coercion ; it reigns with-

in ; we accept its yoke before submitting ourselves to it ; we do more, we justify its power by acknowledging the legitimacy of its rights. We are still free in our external actions, but if we use this freedom contrary to the indications of evidence, we condemn ourselves, while, in obeying evidence, we enjoy the internal approbation and the satisfaction which accompany it. This is a lofty kind of obedience, which raises the soul before it can subject it, and strengthens while it enchains. Respect, not fear, is the characteristic of this just and enlightened obedience ; for we feel, that there is a sacred character in truth, even if we do not recognise its august source. And all truth claims this respect, for however remote a consequence may be from the principle, it is only the continuation of the principle, and borrows light from it. To an unlimited intellect the consequence would be one with the principle, but the limits of our minds generally separate the one from the other more or less.

The sentiment of the beautiful is accessible to most of us, even to the ignorant, although to all the revelation is more or less imperfect. It is produced in a thousand different forms, penetrating through all the avenues of the imagination and senses, causing the most vivid and the most profound emotions. But the love of truth is only developed in the silence of meditation ; it is more collective, calm, grave and severe ; less known, less familiar, much less understood, and more difficult to be understood. We must judge of it by its effects : nor is the testimony of those, who have tried it, to be overlooked, for that testimony is given in the most favorable disposition of mind, when the soul is calm, the passions silent, prejudice absent, and all is light.

The possession of truth inspires man with a sense of dignity, for he feels the value of the intercourse he holds with the universe and himself ;—the value of that power which he exerts over nature by means of understanding it ; the value of what he gains on all sides, when, from the imperceptible point which he occupies in time and space, he follows the course of

ages that are no more, penetrates into the future, embraces the celestial spheres, and discovers the properties and relations of so many different beings ; when, inconstant and transient as he is himself, he is permitted to sit near the centre of those immutable and universal laws which govern creation.

This sense of dignity is not, however, the love of truth, and may even destroy it ; for the love of truth supposes, in the treasure for which it aspires, a peculiar value and merit, independent of all personal enjoyment. This sense of dignity is very far also from being satisfied here below : it often gives place to a sadness and a humiliation, still more true to our nature ; for what are the truths we can enjoy, compared to those which must escape us ! The love of truth is constant and equal, animating the search, as well as accompanying the possession of it : and even feeding upon the sadness, which our doubts and experience of error and feeling of ignorance inspire, being pure in proportion as it is more modest and distrustful of itself.

Truth is also the most useful : for its possessor finds in it a first rate instrument, applicable to everything, and necessary for everything ; he finds not only a personal advantage, but the most extensive means of serving other men in society, to which he brings the most certain general and lasting services, by diffusing light. The idea of its utility strengthens and rewards the love of truth ; but it is not all which is contained in the sentiment. Truth is also loved for itself, for it is not only beautiful, but good, and excellent, and worthy of love, when its future application is not even suspected. The love of truth becomes associated with the generous ambition of serving society by the operations of the arts. It animates the efforts of the scholar in his long watchings and meditations, when, a stranger to the crowd, he joyfully renounces pleasure, fortune, and honors, that he may enlarge the patrimony of the human mind ; it sustains the teacher of science in the midst of his perilous explorings and remote wanderings, in which he often

exposes life ; and it procures for him a sublime calmness, which permits him to observe, in the midst of tumults and the storms of nature, in the trouble of the elements and the agitation of the human passions, dangers which instruct more than they terrify him, on which he meditates silently, as if in the presence of his own thoughts only.

The love of truth is requisite also, even for the utility of possible and future application, freeing truth itself from a mercenary value and our impatient desires of applying it too soon. In order to obtain an advancement which may render it fruitful, truth must be studied for its own intrinsic worth ; for experience teaches, that, in most cases, great discoveries present themselves first in speculation. Appollonius, Kepler, Newton and Volta did not foresee the application, which would one day be made of the properties of conic sections, the laws which govern the celestial orbits, the principle of universal attraction, and the Voltaic pile. This isolation from all directly practical application is in the nature and conditions of these scientific discoveries. Their extreme generality, which renders them so difficult to attain, and which is to render them so fruitful, is precisely what prevents us from perceiving, at first, the fruits which they are one day to bear.

This intellectual life, which we have been endeavouring to describe, in the love of the beautiful and of the true, but of which we have hardly sketched the outline, cannot be presented as very real to certain minds, especially to those which derive all their motives from the senses, and which, admitting nothing positive without matter, consider all these treasures of the intellect as illusions.

In the same way the principle of animal life might be disputed, and with much more reason, for this principle is only manifest from its effects, and not from a testimony which we may collect from consciousness. But we must not exalt our inexperience into wisdom, and deny what we do not yet know. The love of truth can only be felt through the intercourse we

have with it; to enjoy this intercourse, we must bring to it a free mind.

He who draws from his meditations on truth, joys unknown to us, has traversed like us those inferior regions of motive, whose limits seem to us the limits of all existence; has, perhaps, called in question the reality of another universe. Sensible nature has been a universal mystery, which he saw, but did not understand; the magnificent book of creation has been opened before him, without his having the power to discern a single character in it. He has wished to subdue matter to the exigences of his desires; and found matter rebellious to him, hiding from him the secret laws which govern it. He invoked science, perhaps with venal intentions, or from the desire of satisfying a vague curiosity. But when he consulted the discoveries already made, and found explained to him effects, which, till then isolated and floating in the world, were connected with nothing, his satisfaction equalled his surprise. To himself a problem more obscure than all by which he was surrounded, the writings of sages fell into his hands, and he began to consider himself as in a kind of mirror, and to account for his sentiments and ideas. In the midst of fluctuations, which fatigue his mind, he discovers constant and fixed relations and general laws. Each new view, making him suspect that beyond lies still more important knowledge, inspires in him the desire of going farther, and he attempts discovery on the ground of his own strength, nor is he deceived: at last the veil is raised, the unknown is open and clear, a link of the great chain is seized, a new way traced, which has a thousand issues in every direction.

Such is the effect of the love of truth; but it may go to excess. The discoverer will then fall into another error. He will perhaps think he has himself attained the summit of the prerogatives granted to mankind, and that he can satisfy all the wants of his nature with this gift of intellect of which he has discovered the power. But we must not only learn to

give to the intellect the extent of its power, we must also know how to determine its limitation.

By governing our senses and affections, our love of truth receives from them facts, of which science makes use as observations, and receives into its theories. On the other hand, our love of truth ennobles, enlightens, regulates and makes fruitful the impressions and inclinations of the inferior part of our nature, which were blind before. It also gives to our sentiment of the beautiful something more serious and profound; for, mingling with it, it points out to it its true tendency. Thus a first sort of unity begins to be produced as the effect of the human faculties. If we stopped here, however, we should neither have morality nor religion; or at least our morality and religion would not yield all we gain from them, when we attain the developement of all our powers.

Some philosophers found morality upon a theory of the beautiful, considering it a sublime harmony; while others consider morality an institution of reason, and the mere expression of truth.

This is not wonderful; for virtue is altogether beautiful and true. It is majestic in itself; dignified both in action and resistance, calm in repose, grand both in energy, extent, and duration of effect.

It is the archetype of social order, bringing to the general, all individual interest; the supreme regulator of the internal world, directing all its movements to fixed and determinate ends.

Now the basis of virtue must either be the notion of duty, or the charm of this grandeur and harmony. But the latter does not involve the feeling of obligation or the imperative character; and there is no law implied even in the most ravishing beauty. Virtue might inspire all the enthusiasm of the masterpieces of art and of the products of the imagination, without being felt as the rule of life. It might be contemplated and admired, without being practised, and degenerate at last into a

mere speculation, having gained the eloquent lessons of Plato, without having been formed in the school of Socrates.

There is also truth in morality ; for all is simple in its principles, and perfectly connected in its consequences—forming a system where nothing is wanting, and nothing is superfluous, and which harmonizes with the conditions of our nature : it is the most ancient of all sciences, and the only one which is complete, throwing light on a great number of others, and holding the place of several. But as the intellect merely discovers, and does not create truth, so neither is morality its creation. Morality has a reality and preexistence of its own, and the intellect is only allowed to know and render it homage, just as it knows the other Laws of the universe. Put aside the notion of duty, the fundamental law of obligation, or take away their character as primitive truths, and the first link of the chain is wanting, all the consequences being without a principle. Unless there is an object, to which the love of truth may be attached, how can the love of truth replace these motives ? There will be no truth, but only prudence ; teaching us to grant to each inclination and affection, what they require, and not to disappoint desire and hope. But in order to ascertain the respective rank of these inclinations and affections, there will be no other regulator, than the degree of individual pleasure or displeasure, which they procure. The intellect will serve as a guide to the egotism of self-love, and unfortunately render it more skilful. But the moral nature will have no guide. We shall try subtle reasonings, perhaps, and by long deductions shall prove, that private is necessarily bound to general interest ; but these arguments will hardly be sufficient against the passions, nor always be free from error. Reason may prescribe what it is necessary to do ; that is, may plan with reference to the end which is given ; but it supposes a preexisting end, which it does not create, but discover. The moral nature institutes this end. To ask it of reason itself, is to move in a circle.

Religious sentiment receives from the love of the beautiful

and the true, new and worthy nourishment, but still insufficient. Worship is mingled with admiration, for the Supreme Majesty involves all grandeur, and order finds its principle and archetype, and the grand harmony of the universe is explained; while truth, remounting to its source, is endowed with that eternity and immensity which its nature demands. The human intellect, also, from amidst the clouds which envelope it, recovers a sense of dignity, and conceives brilliant hopes, by discovering the focus of all light.

But the Author of all things cannot be perceived as a moral legislator by minds, whose highest motives are love of the beautiful and the true. The attributes of justice and other perfections cannot be discovered in God, till we have conceived them ourselves; and immortality would not therefore appear as retributive, since, without a notion of duty, there could be no notion of merit. It would be an immortality of the intellect, and not of virtue. This religion would therefore have a speculative, poetical, or metaphysical character, in proportion as images of the beautiful, or as abstract speculations preside especially over it: but there would be little influence from it on the character. It would give us exquisite enjoyment, but would not be capable of rendering us better in habit and practice.

CHAPTER IX.

OF MORALITY.

LET us rise another step; let us raise our eyes to those motives, whence spring the conscientious life or morality—to those views, which nourish the sentiment of duty. We are all subject to these motives more or less, and we see morality predominate in the heroes of virtue—those truly immortal men,

whose example, transmitted from age to age, has become the noblest heritage of mankind ;—in short, we see it in all whom we esteem and venerate, and in whom we confide ; for all such give us the feeling, that there is something excellent, which does not deceive, something free, full, and overflowing though untroubled, which finds within itself the principle of activity and the pledge of repose.

In explaining this order of motives, we open that sanctuary where conscience dwells, and gives forth its decrees, where we should collect ourselves, to hear with religious attention, in the silence of our passions and prejudices. Let us describe the phenomena faithfully, without mingling theoretical ideas, which may injure their simplicity. The great law of duty is not at first expressed in a general formula, as an abstract notion. By the wisdom of Providence, this law is first announced in particular examples and in a practical application ; and this is so ordered, because, being indispensable to all men, it must be accessible to all, even the most ignorant and simple, and become the inspiration of infancy as well as the guide of maturity.

We hear this law when we observe, either in ourselves or a fellow-being, deliberate, spontaneous action, done by man as an author or cause. Whenever such an action is done before us (impartial spectators), it excites in us a sentiment of approbation or disapprobation according to its nature, effects, and the motives we suppose in the author. And this sentiment is not the result of reflection upon the personal advantages, which we may hope from the consequences of the action ; for we have supposed ourselves disinterested ; and besides, the sentiment excited is direct, immediate, preceding all deliberate combination. Nor is it the consequence of our judgment concerning the advantage which the action may procure for its author ; on the contrary, from the first glance, the consideration of the advantage which the author sacrifices to fulfil the duty, confirms and increases our approbation, as our observing the personal profit, which he seeks in violating duty, confirms and increases

our blame of him. Our approbation and blame differ from our assent to truth, and our censure of error ; they are attached to idea of merit or demerit, which truth or error cannot call forth. Moreover, our approbation or blame is not checked, when the author of the act has been stopped in the execution of it, by an obstacle independent of his will : the intention itself is what is estimated. And if we play in the action the double part of author and spectator, our approbation or blame will be more decided and energetic, as the intention is more clearly known to us.

But this approbation will be quite a different thing from the pleasure we have experienced before, quite different from the satisfaction born of pleasure ; it will be an inward content of an entirely new kind, which will not be attached to effects but to motives. It will be a testimony of esteem, a kind of eulogium, merited by the author within us, and discerned by him, who, as a spectator within, fills the office of judge. The blame, too, will be quite different from our regret for a false calculation, or a mistake ; it will be a condemnation ; a particular and new kind of punishment, which we call remorse, to appease which, something more will be necessary than to put away the external effects of the action, nothing less than to disarm and destroy the motives which have inspired it : for all which surrounds us might be changed in vain, unless we may be satisfied that the will is purified.

Now if we suppose just such actions as the above done by creatures of our own nature, we should pass the same judgment upon them, whoever does them, or wherever and whenever they are done. If we should suppose such actions as merely possible, we should still pass the same judgment, and give them a general approbation and anticipated blame ; feeling that the one kind is prescribed to us, and the other is forbidden. Approbation or blame will interpose between our will and these actions, when we conceive of them, not as a necessary cause or a necessary obstacle, but as an injunction, which, while leaving us all our

liberty, orders us, or forbids us ; not hinting that we have want of power, but saying to us, You ought to do, or You ought to refrain.

Thus approbation or blame comes to us with the authority of a general constant law, anterior and superior to us, a law which we have not made but are only permitted to discover and obliged to confess, a law which is not coercive, though it commands, and which we have the power of violating, but which we are conscious of, even while we violate it, and to which we are not forced, but laid under an obligation to obey. This law may be misunderstood by the inattentive, and remain obscure from the effect of a too rapid or too light consideration. But the principle itself of the law will preserve its evidence whenever it is attended to ; having the same evidence as any fact which is perceived by reflection on ourselves, the same evidence as any internal phenomena of sensibility or intellect.

It is indeed even more simple, more elementary, and more fixed ; and, what is worthy of remark, the light, that surrounds it, shines more abundantly, brightly and purely, in proportion as we are more free from all which commonly deceives our reason, agitates our soul, or troubles our imagination. And it shines brightest, when we have obtained the highest degree of peace and liberty of mind. Let us not embarrass these phenomena of conscience with our own subtleties. Every order of knowledge rests upon primitive phenomena given by external observation, or by consciousness, which is nothing but inward or reflective observation. There is no possible knowledge, unless we take observed facts as a foundation, even as there would be no compounds without elements, nor consequences without operative causes. There are, then, laws for moral beings, that is, for sensitive, intelligent and free beings, as there are laws for material beings, organic or inorganic. They have, in common with the latter, generality and constancy ; but the laws which assign to these beings their natural destination, and which are instituted to lead them to it, differ from moral laws in an

essential particular ; for the laws which govern inorganic or organized matter, act unconsciously, infallibly, and determine absolutely, their modifications ; but the laws which govern moral beings, addressing themselves to their intellect and to liberty, and respecting both, (because they are to lead such beings by means of this liberty and this intelligence) merely propose and prescribe, leaving them to consent and execute ; they teach and show the model, and are a manifestation of the destination ; but they do not carry towards it, they merely order men to tend towards their destination, the accomplishment of which has nothing of necessity about it, being imposed as a duty. By having injunctions imposed on us, our independence is revealed to us ; and we are elevated to higher dignity, in proportion as their power is more sensibly felt. Material nature obeys its laws without knowing them ; human nature, morally speaking, obeys its laws because it knows them.

Moral laws bind us, by laying us under obligation, which corresponds to duty. We are not enslaved, but we obey. A moveable body cast into space, goes inevitably, in a given direction, with a velocity determined by its weight, together with the impulse it has received. The organs which perform the internal and animal functions, accomplish their ministry without our intervention, by virtue of laws which are hardly suspected. But this is not duty ; since there is nothing which retraces the image of duty. The animal follows the suggestions of instinct, without deliberating ; this is not duty. We ourselves are sometimes carried away by the attraction of a pleasure, or the fear of an evil, which leave us no power to reflect ; this is not duty.

A self-evident truth, as soon as it is presented to our minds, commands our assent ; this is not always duty. *Do to others what thou wouldst wish should be done to thee* : this is duty. Perhaps we shall do, perhaps we shall not do to others what we would wish to be done to us : but whatever part we adopt, duty will not be the less accomplished or violated ; we shall feel it and see it. There is no need of preamble or commen-

tary ; it is defined, explained, and justified of itself ; and justified better in proportion as it is expressed in simple and concise language, separated from systematic theories, and everything which is foreign to it, and left to that sense of obligation which proclaims it within us. This is then a second kind of Law ; a kind of Law which doubtless affects and enlightens the intellect, but which penetrates into the empire of our internal liberty, as a rule and precept, meeting there an agent who has power to follow it, and a judge who cannot dispense with applying it. This great law of moral beings, which we therefore call *moral law*, which is not the work of men, or the product of custom or habit, and which is inherent to the constitution of human nature, has received, for this reason, the name of the *natural law*. This law, which is the same at Rome and Athens, the sages of all ages and countries have not instituted, yet promulgated, and it has lent to their words its own authority ; conferring upon them the office of legislators in society : furnishing the type of positive laws, and stamping its sanction upon them, it has transmitted its rights to them, and opened to them the empire of conscience : investing the father of a family directly with its authority, it has invested the prince and the magistrate with the same authority, indirectly, and through the medium of political and civil laws : it has invested man with it in regard to himself : it has also created all rights, both collective and individual, for there is no right which does not correspond to an obligation ; they are even derived from preexisting obligations. The moral law, by manifesting the destination marked out by our nature, not only prescribes, it also invites : to the voice of its authority is also joined another language, which penetrates us with a singular power, and bears encouraging words, which are at once sweet and sublime. Then from our inmost heart, a new kind of affection, holy and generous, rises up to answer it. What was duty becomes a pleasure, and a pleasure of an exquisite nature, superior to all others ; what was obedience becomes zeal and love, a love eminently legitimate and just, since

it is directed to what is excellent in itself, and is sanctioned and supported by the approbation of conscience. It is this language of virtue, which lends its eloquence to the teachings of wisdom; so often silences the storms of the most violent passions; it is this which excites profound emotions at the sight of good actions, and ardent emulation, more intense than envy, but free from its bitterness; it is this which, at the mere thought of a good action, calls forth so vivid a desire to find it possible, and so pressing a wish to attain to it; it is this which diffuses a celestial joy in the heart when a noble desire is accomplished; it is this which unites all men by a sure and quick sympathy in the cause of goodness, if they are but attentive, and free from the preoccupations of self-love. More powerful than the charms of the masterpieces of genius, more powerful than glory itself, it has no need of external aid, or of any combination of art, or any other witness than the conscience; it borrows nothing from the imagination; and it is charming in proportion as it is calm; and its calmness is its charm.

The love of virtue has a distinctive character; a serenity and equanimity, which arise from inward approbation. It is all satisfaction and repose; nothing troubles, nothing agitates it; it is without emptiness or regret, because without illusion or mistake.

Irresistibly taking possession of an ingenuous soul, it also becomes the refuge of hearts which have been flattered and deceived by the ambition of life, and imparts to them new enjoyment. It demands rectitude only from those who are beginning life, and is confirmed among those who have lived, by all their experience.

In a moral point of view, the merit of praiseworthy actions not only springs from the greatness of the effort, but from the excellence of the object; it is measured by the relation of the one to the other. Morality, as it is the voice of law, commands obedience, is absolute and rigorous; repressing, forbidding, pla-

cing barriers, to be defended by respect, and suffering no violation : and thus it requires precise formulas.

But when it takes the language of exhortation, and addresses itself to love, without ceasing to be as luminous and clear, it is somewhat indefinite, and embraces a vaster field ; incessantly showing us the best, not condemning us with an inflexible severity, when we have tried all our strength permits, but calling upon us to attempt constantly all which is really possible. The pleasures connected with the practice of virtue are so true, so deep, and so exquisite, that they have naturally been confounded with the source whence they emanate, and thence they have been considered as the definition of virtue itself. Thus a kind of interested motive has been given to virtue, a motive springing indeed from the noblest self-love, but which is put in the place of motives drawn directly from the principle of obligation. But this mistake is easily corrected. We take the effect for the cause, and the emanation for the source. We enjoy virtue because we approve it, and it must have something worthy of approval ; we cannot approve virtue excepting by referring to some time which is anterior to it ; our enjoying good morality does not create it—our enjoyment is the love of it ; we therefore suppose it existing independently of our enjoyment. To derive obligation from enjoyment, would be absolutely the same thing as to derive light from the phenomena of vision. Good morality is not good merely because we enjoy it ; we enjoy it because it is good, and it is precisely this goodness, which our enjoyment discovers and declares. It is the same with that sense of dignity, which the love and practice of virtue calls up in the heart of man. If the love and practice of virtue give so deep and true a consciousness of our own dignity, is it not because we are associated by these with what is already great and eminent of itself ? To found virtue upon dignity, is wrong, if we do not suppose, that dignity, in its turn, finds in it an independent title, from which it borrows its rights ; otherwise we are proud of our dignity merely ; this would be taking the con-

sequence for the operative cause. From the nobleness peculiar to virtue, and which virtue confers upon us, are derived all the ideas of nobleness, honor and glory, which must be either its emanation or its reflection, a solemn expression of its existence, or a simple emblem which derives all its real value from its fidelity to the type.

But this mistake has no serious dangers, if, when in founding virtue upon enjoyment, we demand this enjoyment of virtue alone; the effect then will at least lead back to the cause. It would be a greater error to separate them from one another, and thus to deprive virtue of an auxiliary, the assistance of which is as natural as it is useful. For it is in the atmosphere of virtue, that pleasure and well-being take the character of happiness, and that self-love discovers and embraces its true tendency. And happiness, if it be not virtue, at least is its herald; announcing its presence, as promise; and following it, as a worthy and faithful reward. Providence is pleased to make happiness flow from virtue, as it has given perfume to flowers, flavor to fruit, glory to light, and attracting forms to all useful objects; the indulgent and beneficent teacher of man endeavours to call his attention to the most worthy objects of study, to interest him in the pursuit of excellence which is valuable in itself, sustaining his efforts, encouraging his weakness, binding him by the gentlest ties to the severest duties, and leading him to find what is most agreeable in what is necessary. Let the good man render thanks to Providence, bless and enter into its views, accept the cup of happiness at the banquet of virtue, and not presume too much upon himself! The pleasure connected with the impressions of the senses, and confined within the limits necessary for its own economy, the different kinds of pleasure which surround the affections of the heart, the contemplation of the beautiful, and the possession of the true,—are so many progressive steps which lead to happiness, approaching nearer and nearer to it, without being happiness itself, and only making it foreseen and desired; it is thus that the pleas-

ures granted to man are in proportion to his moral progress. But inferior orders of pleasures, when left unregulated, often exclude and contradict one another ; we can only enjoy one at the expense of another, and often one of these pleasures is destroyed and poisoned by its own wanderings and excesses ; but received and adopted by virtue, they harmonize with it, virtue being for them a kind of measure, giving them their proportion and full harmony. The pleasure of self-love, when gratified by the senses, is also somewhat concentrated and narrow, but agitated and fearful ; being confined to self, while enjoying it, we do not perceive its ends, nor discern its utility : but when governed by virtue, our self-love discovers the end which was wanting, and becomes free from grossness and impurity, and is kept in bounds by the necessities of a wise and prudent economy. The pleasure of affection is uncertain in its object, and often cherishes without being able to esteem ; but virtue, by giving esteem for its nourishment, teaches true love. The pleasures of the mind are confined to a speculative region ; but virtue introduces them into the sphere of the will, that they may influence action ; giving them deep reality, it makes them the property, and, as it were, the substance of our soul, converting the assent of the reason into an approbation of the conscience, and the satisfaction which contemplation had given, into an inward contentment which renders our self-intercourse delightful. Let us not separate what God has united, virtue and happiness ; let us not take from virtue its crown, or disinherit our nature of the blessings which it reaps from it, and of the aid which renders it accessible to the weak. And yet it would not only poison the essence of virtue, but would often compromise the accomplishment of it, to rest it here below upon the pleasures it gives, whatever may be their elevation or purity.

These exquisite joys and these sweet pleasures are not always in proportion to the merit of goodness ; like the sensibility to which they are addressed, they are somewhat vague and restless, and are modified in the same individual according to the

circumstances and dispositions of the moment, and sometimes indeed as if to put virtue to the best and severest of tests, they seem to be refused to the heart of the good man, and to leave him, even while he is sacrificing himself, in a kind of external desolation which afflicts and disconcerts him. The character of a regulator would then vainly be sought in pleasure, nor could pleasure have that precision which a precept needs. Virtue is always equal to itself, universal, immutable, always expecting the same actions and efforts, whatever may be the fluctuations of our sensibility; and its merits are increased by the very trials which the momentary privation of the pleasures it promises makes us undergo. There are certain virtuous actions which would become impossible, if they could only be made lawful by the motive of enjoyment; and these are the most heroic actions; for example, the spontaneous sacrifice of life, when it is required by the interests of our country or of humanity: we then have no leisure to taste of happiness, nor time to think of it, and we offer all which we might expect of it upon earth, as a burnt-offering to virtue. Happiness may fill the long life of a Plato; it may also adorn the last hours of a Socrates; but would it satisfy a Decius or an Assas?

The intellect receives the tribute of the senses and affections, and the moral powers receive the tribute of the affections and intellect; for morality establishes a sort of alliance between sentiment and truth, a harmony between the heart and reason: hence certain philosophers have referred morality to one of these two sources, when from the natural inclination of the mind to system, they have wished, in their analyses, to go back to one exclusive source. The affections (according to some) explain duty, because there are some affections conformable to duty, (but those only which are regulated and owned by duty). Truth explains duty according to some, because the maxims of duty often unite with the conviction of universal and immutable truth. Merit and demerit, however, spring from morality, and with this distinction is produced a primitive sen-

timent, which heightens all others, and which has its own character, that is, esteem both for others and for ourselves. Who does not feel how changed and enlarged existence is, when virtue has diffused over it light, and brought to it motives? Who would confound the internal life of the good man with that of the man deprived of the communion of conscience? Have they the same points of view, the same motives, the same state of the soul? Who of us, when he yields to the solicitations of an interested self-love, would dare to liken his condition to that of those who have consecrated themselves to the worship of what is good? Who of us does not bear them a secret envy, deploring, even when hesitating to follow their steps, that he has not courage to imitate them? Who of us has not been permitted to participate with them, in some moments, too transient, perhaps, but the remembrance of which charms us and helps us to preserve self-esteem? Let us recall those fortunate days of our youth, when our soul, full of ingenuous rectitude, first opened to the rays of this new life, the true life of humanity. Was this a vain illusion of our inexperience? Has virtue failed in its promises? Let us ask him who has himself tried the world, and who, in the evening of his days, having experienced long sufferings, and being fatigued even by pleasures, assigns to human things their true value. He has found his repose and refuge where we first found our joy and hope. All the rest has disappeared; one single good seems true to him, one alone is necessary to him.

Beauty and goodness, bright images animating and adorning human nature, and seeming to make it share in a superior nature—what are they? Whence do they come? Did the wise man discover the secret of their origin, who derived them from the divine essence itself? But let us not hasten in our enthusiasm to fathom these great mysteries.

Let us fear illusions; even those which proceed from the most praiseworthy sentiment. The sacred notions of virtue

were given us as a guide for habitual and positive practice. If we discover what they prescribe, it is sufficient. Abstract theories upon the essence of moral beauty may be subjects for systematical discussion, but the oracles of conscience are not so; and the love of the excellent is sufficiently explained by itself, to him who wishes to understand it.

CHAPTER X.

THE RELIGIOUS NATURE.

RELIGION is natural to man, because it is necessary to him, and answers to his natural wants, and to the laws of those faculties which he has received from nature.

To say that religion is natural to man, is not however to suppose that we possess it from our cradle, but that we have a predisposition for it, and attain it by the simple development of our constitution. The opening germ is not yet invested with all its forms, nor furnished with all which may belong to its organization, when the soul is fully unfolded.

But religion is as natural to man as that social state in the midst of which it is established, and of which it is the vital element and preserver.

The constant and universal testimony which history bears, would be sufficient to convince us of this; but no one can fail to perceive the essential relation, which exists between religious sentiment, and the condition of humanity. The variety of dogmas and exterior forms may be explained by the influence of a variety of circumstances, to which different ages and different people are subject; such as institutions, traditions, manners, perhaps climate; but through these artificial modifications is discovered a common fount of ideas and affections, the origin

of which cannot be explained by circumstances. Consequently its root exists in dispositions anterior to these influences, and independent of all exterior causes.

Moreover religious sentiment is developed and purified, as society is civilised ; and destroyed as civilisation declines. The tendency of human nature to religion is in proportion to its tendency to perfection ; and these two great ends of Providence are in perfect harmony, explaining and confirming each other. We know that the perfection of each being consists in the developement of his peculiar nature, and that we are more religious in proportion as we are more nearly perfect, and, reciprocally, that we become perfect in becoming religious. By rising to this new order of motives, we acquire our highest prerogative, not only being placed in relation with all that is most elevated and excellent, but also possession being given to us of a future, abounding with hopes. This new order of motives begins to act precisely where all other motives terminate. It comes at the same time to prolong and elevate our existence. It is the accomplishment and issue of our destiny.

It is the presentiment of this new existence which agitates, moves, and incites us, while we traverse all inferior regions, where we are ever seeking, ever hoping, though ignorant of any future, until we attain this abode of satisfaction and repose. — This imperious want daily becomes more lively and more explicit, as we advance in our career, and obey the laws which should govern us. It becomes more lively as we know ourselves better.

Before we have risen to act upon religious motives, how many contradictions and perplexities there are in our nature ! Our noblest attributes seem to be the most deceptive, from the uncertainty which perplexes the limits which confine us ; for what is human life, if not a vast desire and a great attempt ?

Man alone, of all living beings, is aware of the speedy termination of his days ; he sees, while yet afar off, the tomb open to receive him, and the fatal decree, incessantly resounding in his ears, contradicts the instinct of preservation, pro-

claimed by the voice of the senses ; or gives it a mournful accent. He alone is sensible to the tender affections ; but whether these affections are refused or obtained, he loves, only to see what he loves removed from him, or be himself separated ; his heart expands only to be torn by despair, and he is ready to curse the blessings which have excited him. Models of truth and beauty transport and bewilder him, but he desires them more when he cannot possess them ; and he sometimes discovers only detached fragments of truth and beauty, and sometimes a cloud conceals them altogether ; or, perceiving them only in an imaginary world, when recalled to himself and to sad reality, he resembles a traveller thirsting and dying in the midst of a desert. The arm of a wretch or a fool, the slightest accident, may forever destroy the most magnificent work of art, or a breath of wind may destroy it. And even when virtue resolves this difficult problem of destiny, a sanction is still wanting. Placed in the presence of austere and difficult duties, we are afflicted by our own weakness, and invoke assistance. The present cannot satisfy the moral faculties, and we begin to feel the greatest need of an order which this world seems to contradict, of a future which the earth denies. It is true that virtue promises happiness and also frequently demands a sacrifice for it. But the soul she has ennobled demands a worthy communion, even admission at the gates of heaven ; and will such a confidence be abused ? Will man be repulsed from the threshold of the temple where he kneels in supplication ? Reason justifies the desires of virtue ; and from these desires themselves comes the influence which justifies them ; for, from the general analogy of the laws of the universe, we see in each want the indication of a corresponding object. All who thirst find wherewith to quench their thirst : the newly born infant is not deceived in his desires ; and will the man faithful to his vocation, be deceived by his Creator ?

The idea of the Supreme Being, conceived as a moral legislator and judge, can alone imprint upon religion its true character, and identify it with conscience. The moral senti-

ment finds in this alliance the means of fulfilling its mission, and Religion, through the medium of morality, penetrates and seizes all the faculties of the soul. The interest of preservation is no longer an instinct, but is in union with the designs of the Creator; restless sensibility is reassured and finds comfort; reason obtains a solution of its doubts, seizes the link of the great chain of causes, and discovers the principle of the universal plan; while the efforts of virtue find a support, and its merits a recompense.

We shall return afterwards to the manner in which the progress from morality to religion is effected, and to the renovation which religion causes in the whole system of the human faculties; but let us clearly determine the characteristic conditions of what we call *the religious* nature in man. There is a fundamental consideration which seems to prepare us for conceiving them. It is this: in the universe we see an ever increasing progression commencing at brute or unorganized matter. This progression apparently seems to stop at man; and yet, in several respects, he is himself a beginning, a sketch, a corner stone, and the most noble portion of him is precisely that which is not finished; the column remains without the capital; the dome does not yet crown the edifice; and the universal plan announces certain summits which remain still veiled, above what is seen. In like manner, the mountain is often enveloped, at a certain degree of elevation, by a girdle of clouds which conceal its summit; while above, the pure heaven reigns, and the rays of the sun shine unobstructed. Man in his present state seems to have relations only with beings who are his inferiors or equals: but he would be singular, if he could not commune at the same time with a region more elevated than his own; for all the other works of nature are intermediate, and, by the different properties they possess, are united at once to a system which they terminate, and to one which they commence: moreover, man alone is endowed with the power of conceiving what is more perfect than himself—alone aspires to it. This insatiable desire of rising, and of

growing great, meets in power and renown nothing but false and deceitful indications; such conquests, far from satisfying what is most excellent in him, injure and corrupt him. Does not this portion of his nature, which corresponds and communicates with a more perfect order of things, and which tends to be developed by it, and which we call his religious nature, complete the system of his faculties, precisely in the same manner as religion completes the general system of the universe? Man thus becomes, through sentiment and thought, the organ of creation, in the tribute of gratitude which it offers to its Author; he becomes the delegate of supreme intelligence upon the visible scene of the world; he exercises upon earth a kind of priesthood.

Now we see that this religious principle puts in action two disinterested motives, which we have before mentioned, Law and Love; that it gives to both the highest degree of their energy; and under this relation it finishes the work, which the preceding modes of existence had commenced: not that Providence has imposed upon man the absolute sacrifice of self-love, and commanded him thus to commit a kind of suicide; for Providence does not contradict itself, but wills the happiness of its creatures, and therefore it wills that the intelligent creature should take care of its own happiness; but in worship, God desires from man a homage worthy of him, and, by an admirable concordance, this homage to divinity is nothing but the exercise of powers which render us better.

The error of Fenelon was a sublime one. Tender and generous, he conceived in all its purity that principle of love, which gives to religion the most perfect character, because it requires the most absolute sacrifice. The worship of the heart, such as Fenelon demanded, free from all self-love and confined exclusively to love, is wanting in but one condition, which is the possibility of the human creature's attaining it in the present state of his earthly existence; there was but one error in the author of the *Maxims of the Saints*: but it was not contagious. How great must we be to be thus deceived! The

contrary error is much easier and more general, and more fearful in its consequences.

As submission should be equal to dependence, a boundless submission is due to the infinite, creative, and preserving power, the Supreme Arbiter of all destinies, to that power which alone possesses the keys of the future. The foot of the throne is the refuge of weakness, where every fear obtains a safeguard, and every hope a security. But this submission is still only the beginning of worship; it is only, as it were, a servile tribute. There is a voluntary and reflective obedience, in which liberty is exercised and preserved. It is this which is due to the moral legislator; for Law from him comes forth animated, entire, in all the brightness of majesty, no longer to rule the course of events merely, but, demonstrated by the holiness of its precepts, to promulgate the code of duty, which itself becomes the essence of worship.

It is indeed the most noble characteristic of religion, that the principle upon which reposes the existence of human society and individual amelioration, is consecrated by the practice of virtue, being raised to the dignity of an appointment of God, who thus confers upon it a new merit, and gives to it a witness, a judge, and a remunerator. To acquire excellence is the true worship. Religious obedience is supported upon confidence; for the law it acknowledges is no other than that of wisdom itself; religious obedience is like that of a son to the wishes of his father: for such is the touching title, which man is permitted to give to the Sovereign of the Universe, and which expresses the august intercourse, to which the humble creature is admitted. Yet obedience itself is not sufficient for the worship of the heart. The essence of worship is love, nourished by gratitude; going before all precepts, even the divine; rendering the burthen of them light, and pleasant, even embracing the burthen of them joyfully. Love, that mysterious and all-powerful faculty, the noblest attribute of humanity, which asks in vain of all nature aliment worthy for it, obtains it at last

in the homage it renders to the Author of Nature ; without taking away any of the sentiments of esteem or admiration, it mingles them all in one sentiment, which is addressed to infinite perfection ; and by retracing it, it finds its own origin. Religion is only well understood by piety ; without piety it is only a calculation of prudence, perhaps but a cold ceremony, a kind of civil institution. With piety it converts into another Eden this world which is so sad to the egotistical. It is no longer merely the internal existence of the man which is changed, it is the whole universe, which takes a new aspect, as if enlightened with a celestial brightness : creation itself seems renewed ; and, with harmonious concert, appears to accompany the hymn of the intelligent creature, while it rises to the Author of All Things. Thus to the three grand attributes of Divinity, power, wisdom, and goodness, the three principal movers of the moral nature, self-love, obedience, and love, offer homage, so as to constitute the three grand relations of which religion is composed. All that is lawful in self-love may expect everything from Him who can do everything. Virtue is illuminated by the rays of eternal wisdom ; and the flame of Love is kindled at the focus of infinite goodness. It is also worthy of remark, that this religious life, which occupies the summit of the seat of perfection, is yet accessible to all ; to the weakest as well as to the most powerful ; even seeming to admit the weakest with a kind of predilection ; supplying the studies of reason and the light of experience.

It only demands of man what he already has received from nature, good sense and uprightness of heart, and is itself above the caprices of fortune, and which it delights to repair : it is alone constant if we except morality, which is one with it, remaining to us always equally faithful, and more generous as we are more destitute. And this is necessary ; since there is for every one, whatever may be his situation here below, a perfection, which is possible to him ; and whose conditions therefore should be adapted to all destinies ; and those, who fail of external aid, need to find other aid in a power within.

CHAPTER XI.

UPON THE GENERAL CONDITIONS OF PROGRESS.

If now we glance in thought over all the faculties of the soul, such as they have just been unrolled before us, we shall perceive a general indication of a progressive movement towards perfection, which is impressed upon man by the Author of his being; and which is his great vocation upon earth. The destination of each of his faculties is marked by the rank which it occupies; and in proportion as the plan is developed, unity is more and more apparent; for all these faculties aid each other and proceed together; and with their end is revealed the relations which unite them.

Man, placed on the confines of two worlds, on the material and moral, the transient and eternal, the visible and invisible world, borrows from each and communicates with both, being intermedial, and a bond between them; and this mixed condition partly explains the contrasts his nature exhibits. In his relations with the external world he finds himself passive; and in his relation with the region of sentiment and thought he finds himself active; in the one he receives; in the other he produces; and this is why the first order of relations serves as a prelude for the second.

Yet man reacts upon the material world by the operations of the arts, as afterwards he submits himself voluntarily, in the moral world, to an enlightened dependence, when he renders homage to the laws which govern his nature.

We have said that man is connected with two worlds. Through the senses, he takes possession of his terrestrial abode; the affections and the intellect are the portals which give him access to the other; and morality and religion await him in that,



to render him at once happy and free, useful to himself and to others. Thus our organization has a progressive direction, each organ contributing its share, each delivering to the other what it has progressively drawn forth ; like a precious plant, whose roots are in the soil, and whose sap is abundant, which throws towards heaven its branches and foliage, unfolds odoriferous flowers, and is loaded with fruits that afford seeds of a new future : or, to speak more clearly, the progressive scale of the human faculties represents the general system of the laws of the universe, in which the phenomena of the earth are in such a relation with those of the heavens, and in which the qualities inherent to each substance, heat, light, motion, and reproduction, are so combined, as to produce a general and ever renewing harmony.

To the five degrees of the ascending scale, correspond five kinds of good, which are so many special ends, marking out for each order of faculties the destination which is proper for it. The exercise of the senses has for its object the preservation of the individual, which we may call personal good ; the affections identify personal good with the happiness of others ; the intellect has truth for its end and science for its treasure, which form an intellectual good ; the moral faculties have duty for their end and virtue for their treasure ; while religious worship puts man in possession of the future, and gives him an end beyond the limits of his terrestrial existence, in his communion with Him who is the source and beginning of all things. But none of these different ends is exclusive ; no one remains isolated ; each serves in its turn as means and instrument to all the others ; they become more powerful in their turn, in proportion as they themselves approach perfection, and that which is the most elevated of all, is of all the most fruitful. The simplicity and unity of this system is remarkable : religion sanctions, commands and rewards virtue, prescribing preservation, personal and general happiness, by means of virtue, also bringing to perfection and giving true value to the under-

standing. In the vast chain of causes and effects, man alone, among visible beings, unites the character of both; he is the link which joins them; for, all material causes are properly mere effects, since they are limited to render what they have received; man alone is an agent, for he alone acts from himself. It is to be remarked, that the effects which compose the material world occupy the region of the senses; but the causes are in the invisible and superior world; for there cannot be true causes except in intelligent, powerful and free will.

The perfection of all beings, as we have said, consists in the faithfulness with which they conform themselves to their nature. The perfection of man, then, consists in his pursuing and attaining the five kinds of good, which we have just mentioned, according to the relations of subordination and harmony, which exist between them; for it is thus, as we have just seen, that the different orders of his faculties will accomplish their respective destinations.

Two essential conditions, therefore, serve as a basis to our progress; one that we should know how to find the end which is best in itself; the other that we should be capable of attaining it; and these conditions suppose complete liberty; that is, the liberty of choosing and of acting from what we have chosen. If, when exercising will, we could not consider what is best, this capricious exercise would be the abuse rather than the use of it. If, when aiming at the best, we have not force enough to attain it, we should be consumed in vain desires, and our very deep sense of the excellence of the end would become our despair. But by this union of a twofold condition, we join the merit of choice to that of effort; the value of the one being in the motive, that of the other in the instrument.

Hence we have two great moral powers, upon which seems to depend our progress; namely, the Love of Good, and Self-government. In common language, the Love of Good means zeal for the interests of humanity; but we give it its most extensive and general sense. In good, we comprehend all which

is excellent in itself, as an end proposed to the human will, (adopting the language of the sages of antiquity ;) and by love we understand that enlightened, free, generous emotion of the soul, which is as entirely devoted as it is sincere ; and this principle therefore may perhaps be better distinguished, if we call it the Love of Excellence.

This devotion to excellence, this kind of consecration, by which man gives himself and all he possesses to the end, which he has acknowledged as his destiny, is the true living principle of humanity, the source of all the great and useful, which it produces : it is the soul of heroism and the genius of virtue. The essence of all our moral activity dwells in it. It is an expansive force, indefinite and illimitable ; a profound, inward, insatiable passion of the soul, at the same time delightful and peaceful, because it puts the soul into its natural element, carrying it into the midst of order, accomplishing all its wishes, and satisfying all the desires, which are derived from its essence. Happy and proud of what we have just acquired, the joy we feel is not only a desire to acquire more, but a new power.

The only source of calm happiness and inward content, is the consciousness of this Love of Excellence. The models of it are whatever, in great and generous characters, excites admiration, esteem and emulation. Its fruits may be found in all that diffuses abundant and lasting blessings over the earth ; in all that acts without destroying ; in all that creates, multiplies and ameliorates ; and its dignity, and the heritage which awaits it, may be seen in our tendency towards a superior nature, in our participation with it, and our presentiments of the future. This devotion to excellence, such as we conceive it, finds no aliment in the motives which address the senses ; it only finds in them support, images, signs, means of communication, and matter for sacrifices. But though yet blind and unreflecting, it begins to play and flourish in the region of the affections, when we exert ourselves to go beyond Self-love. Reason enlightens it in

the intellectual region ; while moral sentiment defines and justifies it, whence it acknowledges and embraces its true end. But it is fully explained and satisfied in the religious sphere only, where it is completely resolved ; subduing Self-love by adopting, transforming and purifying it, although always at open war with egotism, that is, with gross, absolute, savage, exclusive personal feeling, which it is its calling to struggle with, to conquer and exterminate. It comprehends and mingles in itself, both reverence for Law and the devotion of Love ; for it includes the disinterested principle, which is common to both, and we abjure ourselves equally in obedience and zeal. If we give to this devotion the name of *Love*, it is because love expresses the most perfect and most elevated state of it ; it is still obedience, inasmuch as Love accompanies and vivifies an enlightened obedience. The Love of Excellence is, if we may so speak, animated and active conscience ; it does not merely express its desires ; it supposes approbation of the end we have chosen ; but it is more than approbation, it is a just and holy enthusiasm for what is good ; it is the intense, persevering and ever-increasing thirst for the best. The characteristic of the Love of Excellence is, then, to dilate, to aspire to the future, to mount, and to be constantly progressive. And Self-government is the lever by whose aid the inspirations of the Love of Excellence are accomplished. Man disposes of his organs, rules his affections, governs his ideas, commands his will itself. By turns he excites, moderates, directs, represses ; in a word, he reigns, —his inclinations being his subjects, and his faculties his ministers ; the internal kingdom over which he is appointed, awaiting the action of the government to receive order and peace. He reigns, however, not without meeting resistance ; but with the mission and power of triumphing, not only by strength, but by right. He not only acts on himself, but gives the law ; he is not a tyrant, but a sovereign.

This last consideration demands our most serious attention ; it explains the true character of Self-government. There is

Law because there is a destination ; and this Law is promulgated and proclaimed within. This Law, so deeply felt, is a proportion instituted to preserve ; a deposit, a guide, given to the moral being, to conduct him to his end. As the child, the pupil and the citizen are so many deposits, trusted to parents, tutors and magistrates ; as parents, tutors and magistrates are charged to make known to them the laws of reason, and the prescriptions of society, for the greatest good of each and of all ; so also man is a deposit, confided to his own care by Providence, owing protection to himself ; and he should govern himself, because he is himself the interpreter and organ of anterior laws, which rule his nature. We shall here find, as it were, two natures, united in one individual, the one passive, the other active ; one feeble, because ignorant ; the other powerful, because enlightened. Man is his own property, because he ought to be his own guide. The authority that he exercises over himself, is only that of virtue ; deriving from virtue dignity as well as legitimacy ; and the right he has over himself is only the emanation of his duty. Man exercises within, a true and high magistracy ; he shows himself there as the delegate and minister of God himself.

What are all those forms of ambition with which vanity torments and leads us astray ? What is that external and apparent power, of which we are so jealous, whether we apply our physical strength to matter, or pretend to subdue the wills of other men to the caprices of our own ? Its character, its source, its fruits are nothing, if it does not go back to the same principle, if it be not also a delegation of virtue. This is the end to which all noble and just ambition ought to aspire, and to which all noble and just ambition can attain. When Augustus cries, I am master of myself as well as of the world, it certainly is not the master of the world who is sublime, it is the master of himself who wished and knew it was so. If the condition of the latter seems to raise the merit of the former in our eyes, it is because it renders the triumph of the latter more he-

roic, because the mortal master of himself has subdued the master of the world.

The first kind of Self-government begins in the intellect; man governs the operations of his mind; he separates and combines his ideas; he places signs upon them; he attracts or repels them; he governs himself, because he obeys reason and acknowledges the law of evidence. But in morality, Self-government is explained and finds its end; because it acknowledges the law from which it borrows all its rights—that of duty. Religion consecrates Self-government, because it confounds it with the most just and perfect obedience, and reveals its true origin. But this internal dignity, once thus instituted and confirmed, is transmitted, as it were, by a secondary delegation, to the inferior faculties; and it is thus that it ennobles them by subduing them, because the service, to which it calls them, becomes legitimate, and by serving reason, they extend the dominion of which they are the organs. It is thus that the senses, employed in the operations of art, may subdue material nature to the empire of man; that the affections, regulated by wisdom, may become the bond to unite him to all society; that understanding and imagination may create an ideal world through the fine arts, and bring into the mind the whole universe by the discoveries of science.

These two great moral powers may also not be developed to the same degree; and sometimes we might even be tempted to think, that one increases at the expense of the other; we too often see a high moral enthusiasm in a weak character, and ungenerous sentiments with an energetic will. In the first case there is more contemplation than action—in the second more motion than fruitfulness. Yet these two powers are also associated by close consanguinity in their principle, and one is imperfect when abandoned by the other. What is ardor for excellence, without the courage to accomplish it; and to what, if not to excellence, shall we present the sacrifice of our inclinations? A good action, on the contrary, will be more meritori-

ous the more efforts it costs; and an energetic resolution will be more praiseworthy, the purer the motive is which inspires it.

Of these two great moral powers, the Love of Excellence and Self-government, one assigns the true direction to our faculties, the other gives them energy; one belongs to the springs of the will more especially, and the other to the exercise of liberty; one seems to contribute more to the gentle, and the other to the strong virtues; one predominates in qualities which, like goodness of heart, have an eminently social character; the other in those of which the merit is rather individual, as temperance and courage; one was preferred in the school of Plato, the other at the Portico. It was reserved for Christianity to associate them closely, to confer upon them equal energy, and to give heroes to the Love of Excellence.

Of the three principles which we have acknowledged as presiding over the constitution of our nature—the first of which, Self-love, is purified and enlightened by its alliance with the two others; the two last of which, Law and Love, both including a disinterested character, govern essentially the system of our moral faculties—of these three principles, the two last correspond also to the powers whose action is to develop this system; Law serves as a regulation to Self-government, as love is the inspiration to the Love of Excellence.

It is then in the action and culture of these two powers that we must seek the secrets of the great art of our moral perfection. The different degrees, which constitute the proper exercise of the five orders of faculties which we have distinguished, are the general frame of the work. The Love of Excellence and Self-government will serve to fill it. In placing ourselves in the two points of view, which they offer to our meditations, we shall see presented, according to their relations of subordination and analogy, the different means, which concur in self-education.

BOOK II.

SECTION I.

ON THE EMPLOYMENT OF THE MORAL POWERS.

CHAPTER I.

HOW THE LOVE OF EXCELLENCE MODIFIES SELF-LOVE.

IN considering man in relation to himself and to his fellow beings, five truths are brought to our view.

1. We acquire the just feeling of our rights, by the feeling of our duties.

2. The feeling of duty is a light which guides us to the knowledge of our true interests.

3. We could not accomplish faithfully what is strictly required of us, were we not animated with the desire of the best, which renders us capable of doing more than is required.

4. The finest dispositions of nature go astray, and the best qualities of character degenerate, if not guided by the Love of Excellence, which is their inspiration.

5. The Love of Excellence is the only principle which can continue the work, and accomplish the best designs of nature.

We are led to these truths, by investigating the source of individual rights, and following the course of social relations. At every step, the Love of Excellence appears as a guardian and creative genius.

The Love of Excellence and Self-love seem, at first view, contradictory principles ; the latter is eager to enrich itself, and consequently is inclined to take from others ; the former would acquit its sense of obligation even by dispossessing itself. The different errors of certain philosophers have arisen from this apparent contradiction in the governing principles of human nature. Some have thought that the principle of all human determinations might be traced to self-interest ; others have believed that duty requires an entire immolation of self to the ideal of perfection. And these erroneous speculations, in practice, have given rise to the errors of selfishness, and to the exaggerations of that zeal which misses the end by springing beyond it.

But the Love of Excellence does not tend to destroy Self-love ; it only enlightens it, and turns it towards its true destination.

We appear to ourselves under a new aspect in the light of duty. Moral sentiment reveals to us, that Providence has committed to the care of each of us a sacred deposit, and we cease to be our own slaves ; but we do not consequently become strangers to ourselves, much less our own enemies. Virtue sanctions, directs and limits Self-love ; gives us motives through the sense of obligation and the principle of reflection ; raises us and associates us with our Creator, in his designs and solicitude for one of his noblest works ; in short, it is the guide and protector of man, giving him four important duties, his own preservation, happiness, dignity, improvement ; supplying him also with assistance to discharge those duties.

Self-interest alone, would not even gain the end of self-preservation. Guided by this principle we should make two kinds of mistake ; either, under the weight of misfortune, the interest of self-preservation would be complicated by life's offering only a compound of good and evil ; if the balance seemed turned, we should justify ourselves in the violent resolutions of despair, and lose all the calculations of prudence : or, on the oth-

er hand, it would counsel the cowardliness of indifference, even in the presence of a general interest, which commands us to brave danger. But virtue puts a barrier on the border of the abyss; or removes the obstacle, which prevents us from flying to the relief of others: for, discovering in life a value beyond that of mere personal good, and superior to it, she will not be sacrificed for merely personal considerations. The true value of life arises from our power of being useful; and virtue prevents us from sacrificing to life itself, this end, for which it was given. Thus far, all is harmony; for there is no situation, in which man, however weighed down by personal misfortune, may not be useful, even if he does nothing more than teach how personal misfortune may be supported. Besides, who would flatter himself, that he had preserved, in the anguish of grief, a sufficiently calm judgment to calculate the chances for the future, or the best means for his personal interest? From the illusions into which the instinct of self-preservation would lead us, virtue protects us,—more than supplying the place of prudence; and it also does the work of that instinct, which interest seemed to compromise, by its loftier foresight; for it obtains for us new securities, and more abundant aid, all unawares to ourselves, even through the exposure of ourselves for the common good. For there is always risk, whether we act or not, and whatever we do, especially when Self-love only is in play; but virtue creates a kind of good, to which there is no risk in attaching ourselves, not even that of error, for in the eyes of virtue, error is lost in the intention that springs from perfect rectitude. Self-interest could still less lead us to happiness, or even define it, as is evident from the ever changing, and always incomplete definitions, that the selfish give to it, who always end in pronouncing it a chimera! But this is because happiness does not dwell where self-interest seeks it, in the mere enjoyment of pleasure; for whatever may be the vividness or duration of pleasure, happiness rests upon wider and more difficult conditions, upon a harmony of enjoyments

between themselves and with our wants, and the laws of our faculties ; or with the capacity we have for relishing them, or with recollections of the past, or prospects of the future. Happiness, in short, is a profound economy, that self-interest, in its impatient avidity, cannot combine ; but virtue gives the plan beforehand, putting everything in place, and preserving it in its limits, and preparing the equilibrium, whence personal good flows. The best counsels of self-interest are only those of experience, and they come too late and are too dearly paid for. It is true, there are some philosophical speculations in common practice, but the instrument, by whose aid those learned calculations can be applied to human life, the measure, which may set limits to immediate good and evil, and give a just value to that which is lost in the distance, and the power of reasoning with sufficient accuracy to prevent the illusions of hope and fear, can be obtained from virtue alone, which gives the limits and measure, and guides the reason. It has, as it were, pre-existing formulas, which, by assigning rules to our conduct, secure our happiness from delusions of the imagination and errors of judgment. It has also an influence of calmness and serenity, which seems to prevent these errors, and helps to dissipate them.

Self-interest watches with susceptible exactness, over the interest of our individual pride ; and this pride is rather a desire of esteem, than an acquired right to esteem. The support which self-interest takes to maintain itself in the rank which it desires to occupy, does not entirely belong to it. Decoration is not dignity, and expression is not substance. But morality brings to light authentic titles, those of human nature itself, in which we all participate ; they are those which we derive from our noble origin, those which confer on us an imposing vocation ; for our rank upon earth is elevated by virtue to the sacred dignity of probation. Virtue also teaches us the most direct way to obtain esteem, by teaching us to deserve it ; and authorises us to judge opinion when we are calumniated by it,

and to repel injustice by contempt. She inspires us with more than esteem for ourselves,—with self-respect; for in the midst of all the imperfections of our nature, even through the deformities by which vice or error disfigures man, she makes us discover the primitive traits which were impressed upon his nature by Supreme Wisdom, and helps us to renew this celestial impress. She gives to each of us a kind of public character, by calling upon us to live for society, and invests us with that true dignity, which consists in serving the general interest. Finally, self-interest only calls us to the cultivation of our faculties by a mercenary motive, not suffering us to perceive any other end than that of being more skilful in the art of satisfying our individual wants; and how proud we grow from this skilfulness, and the success consequent upon it! The value we attach to this cultivation is the same as that of gold and power: perhaps the value is less, for gold and power are still more easily employed by those who possess them. But in the eyes of virtue, the treasures which are placed within ourselves, have a much greater value: another interest excites us to improve them; for how much more vast are the consequences we may expect from our own improvement, when we consider the influence that we exert over the happiness of others; when, in cultivating our faculties, we know that we cultivate a germ sown by the Supreme Hand, and which is to be developed in all future time! Our success in this double design depends much more upon our own resources, than upon those we borrow from external circumstances, and it is by inward power that we reap advantage from circumstances. Let us take care not to lavish, wantonly, the accusation of selfishness, upon those moral doctrines, which recommend self-protection to man, although they should contain some theoretical error upon the principle of obligation; especially, if Self-love, thus introduced into practice, has the characteristic it ought to receive from virtue. To prescribe a lawful Self-love, would be to give the lie to nature, and put aside the designs of its Author, who wills that

Self-love should be interested in the accomplishment of his law, and that the accomplishment of his law should be an immense blessing. But let us guard ourselves from concentrating in the single interest of Self-love, how well soever it may appear to be understood, all the motives, which lead us to excellence ! for then we should break that alliance with a purer principle, from which it gains all its advantages.

The self of selfishness, and the self which virtue takes care of, are not the same ; the former is an idol, to which we offer incense, the latter, we know, is blind, and we give it a guide. The first is an absolute end, to which everything is referred ; the second is an instrument, whose merit consists in the usefulness of its services. Intercourse with the first is restless, full of demands and caprices, as barren for the heart as for the mind : intercourse with the second has charms and nobleness, because virtue diffuses over it its own excellence. The first is impoverished because it is solitary ; the second is enriched by all the alliances it contracts.

Since man has duties to fulfil towards himself, it follows, that he has rights over things proper and necessary for their accomplishment. These are correlative terms in the general plan. The means of execution are destined for man, as he is destined to the end, which is marked out for him. Thus, from the duty of self-preservation arises the right of lawful defence ; from the duty which prescribes care of his own happiness, arises the right of employing for it the objects which are at his disposal, that is, not merely those, the employment of which is possible, but those also which are not already occupied by another's right ; from the duty, which commands him to preserve the dignity of his nature, arises the right of making his independence and reputation respected ; finally, from the duty, which obliges him to labor for his own improvement, arises the right that he has to regulate his faculties, his right to truth and the other means of progress. Property itself is derived, either from the right of the first occupant, or from the

right, which labor gives over its own productions, or from a transmission, which goes back to one of those two sources. Now the right of the first occupant, is only the consequence of that which the individual has to appropriate to his personal comfort whatever has not become the property of another ; and the right arising from labor is but the consequence of that which the individual possesses over his own powers, of which labor is the application.

Considered under this point of view, and as the consequences of duties, rights will doubtless be exercised with more moderation, but they also will become more sacred. It will be easier to distinguish when they should be rigorously claimed, and when they are simply lawful ; for it will be sufficient to examine, whether the duty to which they are referred is absolute, and they constitute the only and indispensable means of fulfilling it. Thus we shall understand on what occasions we can give up our rights, and how it can ever become praiseworthy to give up our *apparent* rights ; for instance, when the means destined for the accomplishment of duty turns against the end to which the duty is directed, or may be directly applied to this same end, without producing personal enjoyment at the moment. Thus and especially we shall learn to distinguish rights from pretensions ; thus, by knowing our own rights, we shall learn to know better the rights of others. Were the individual alone upon earth, his rights would have no limits but those of his duties towards God and himself. But placed in the midst of society, and of a society already formed, his condition changes ; yet the same regulator may preside over his destiny.

CHAPTER II.

JUSTICE.

ALL trouble and disorder in society arise from the confusion that exists between rights and interests ; that is to say, from the voluntary or involuntary mistake we make when we pretend to exercise a right, while we merely pursue an interest. Legislators and governments have frequently made this mistake, and hence have come oppressive laws and unjust decisions. Rights and interests can be easily discriminated : the former are limited, the latter clash ; the former, by being limited, are balanced and harmonize ; the latter, being unlimited in their nature and confirmed in their field of exercise, must encroach on the rights of others, to satisfy their own avidity. Now justice may be a general interest, though general interest is not justice ; since the interest of the few must be sacrificed to that of the many, though the rights of the most obscure individual may not be sacrificed to the general interest.

Personal and individual rights are equal ; for each of them springs from the primitive right every one has over himself. Rights over things, arising from labor or original progression, have the same source, though not the same extent : these include what one has lawfully acquired. Moreover, the respect due from each one to the rights of others, arises from the same principle as that which imposes duties on ourselves : it is the will of nature, the supreme law of Providence, which calls upon all men to move on to their common destination in their respective orbits. The proportion of enjoyment granted to different individual interests, is singularly various and vastly disproportionate ; yet interests do not merely aspire to equality, but to dominion ; and it is the tendency of each to monopolize.

General order is preserved by a balance of rights and by inequality of conditions. The justice which surrounds men with the same safeguard, also protects this inequality of conditions against all pretension not founded upon labor and services.

We see the danger of systems, which, founding rights upon interests, give all the extent to the first, which the second include. We see also why the most celebrated advocate of a system of this kind (Hobbes) was obliged to suppose, that the primitive and natural state of society was warlike, and consequently to seek a remedy for injustice as noxious as the evil itself. Not finding it in morality, he sought it in tyranny.

Oppression will always spring from such a principle, but harmony never. Harmony cannot be established unless interests acknowledge the supremacy of rights, and consequently, are ready to make sacrifices; whence it follows, that there is necessarily an element of generosity in justice. There would not be any real rights without this subordination; for men do not have the notion of right without the feeling of duty, which commands us to respect it; they are correlative. The notion of right does not resemble the triumph that ambition obtains through violence. Rights are limited, and consequently defined, by the principle of duty.

So long as interests and rights harmonize, society is free from danger; the moment they clash, it is in peril. Laws and magistrates take the utmost care to keep them united; but their efforts generally avail little. The sentiment of duty completes the work of laws and magistrates, and might supply their place, were it but armed, like them, with the power of the sword; the sacrifices which justice requires, spring from that generosity, which is happily an element of its essence.

It is by the concurrence of generosity, that justice is placed in the rank of the virtues, becoming meritorious, honorable and estimable. The degree of its merit is proportioned to the extent of the devotedness which this generosity inspires, and to

the depth and energy of the sentiment, which makes duty dear for its own sake. He who merely sacrifices to fear, though he may pursue the same conduct, does not sacrifice, but calculate. He is not just, but a coward. We do not call a man just, who refrains from injuring when he finds no advantage in it. In this case, we should all be just without thinking of it; virtuous without effort; good every moment in the day, and even during our sleep. Justice then must be difficult, in order to become a virtue; and, as it is difficult in proportion as a man's neighbour possesses what he wants, a just man's merit is increased by poverty; and justice takes the character of virtue in those who are least favored by fortune; a class, which includes the largest portion of society. When an obscure street-porter finds a treasure, whose proprietor is unknown, and he can take it without being discovered, and yet seeks the owner and continues poor of his own accord, he is only just;—but what greatness there is in this justice! This is an admirable economy of morality, by which those who are least favored by fortune, yet the strongest in numbers, are bound, not with servile bonds, but by a chain which raises while it checks them, and in the very restraint that it imposes upon the lower classes, becomes an honorable distinction. What would become of us, if morality did not thus interpose between the small numbers of the wealthy and the crowd of the indigent? How do the rich repose in peace, and the poor rest satisfied with the hard labor which obtains so small a recompense? O is it not because morality is most powerful and universal? Is it not because there is more real virtue in the world than we in our thoughtlessness suspect? But virtue, if it merely preserves order, is little noticed; crime is striking because it disturbs natural and general harmony; it is known because it offends; it is talked about and published. The historian recapitulates its deeds as he preserves the remembrance of the plagues that ravage the earth, thus calumniating the race he professes to describe.

Sometimes vanity and passion excite men to give, as they

excite them to usurp, or prevent them from making restitution; and hence there may be more disinterestedness in simple justice, than in liberality itself.

But this is not all: in judging the human heart, we discover, that a constant faithfulness to the duty of justice requires something more than the feeling of this duty alone. The formulas of justice are clear, precise and strict; but it is impossible that motives should adapt themselves to these precise distinctions with perfect exactness; and he who would confine himself to desiring merely what is allowable, could not always succeed in accomplishing his wish. A superabundance of sentiment is required to fill the exact measure of duty. Wealth of heart is necessary to procure a competency of integrity. We cannot fully enter into the conceptions of what is just, without putting ourselves, in imagination, completely into the situation of another, so as to perceive how he would see and feel, and thus understand what should be done for him, as if it were to be done for ourselves. Now this identification of ourselves with others supposes a commencement at least of benevolence: we cannot respect much without loving in a degree.

But why is it, that, when all render unanimous homage to the rules of justice, expressed in an abstract and general formula—we so easily dispense with their application? Why do we never commit mistakes to our disadvantage? Is it not because we do precisely contrary to what has just been said? instead of learning to live in others, we are concentrated in ourselves; what wounds our fellow-beings escapes our attention or seems unimportant to us; what wounds ourselves is magnified in our eyes by all the preference we feel for self. We see but one side of the question,—that which is before us; the demands of self-interest become so imperious, that, unconsciously perhaps, we regard them as a peremptory law for everything that relates to us.

Being slaves to our inclinations, we wish to escape from the disgrace of servitude, by justifying it; we desire to enjoy with

more security, and, that we may attain our end, we would like to envelope our selfishness in the mantle of justice; yet such is the real character of justice, that it must be constant and uniform towards every one. A single crime is sufficient to sully the whole course of life. Nothing at first appears more conformable to justice than the right of revenge; it reestablishes the equality, which a usurpation of rights had encroached upon; and this is partly the reason why the law of retaliation was the first criminal code of nations. But the sentiment of benevolence, the law of love, has corrected this cruel error, and sought a truer justice, revealing to us something more than an aggressor in him who offends us; even a brother, who has a claim upon our regard, notwithstanding his offence: making us understand, that, although the barrier which protected our own rights is broken, that, which protects the rights of others remains; that the right of defending ourselves is not that of destroying what we cannot recover; that social equality is not a struggle of hatred. The notion of right, enlightened by the sentiment of duty, teaches us, that, in the transgression of which we are the victims, is comprised a crime towards society, of which we are but the members; and that by taking upon ourselves to punish, we usurp the function of judges. That passion authorises everything against an enemy, is an odious prejudice, which party animosity and national hate too frequently favor. But does virtue permit us to call one of our fellow-creatures an enemy? The progress of social institutions towards perfection must be conformable to the moral progress of individuals: by reserving to the sword of the law the suppression of crime, each one is permitted to observe the counsels of virtue in peace.

Besides, in what is strictly *duty*, there are some things not determined by precise rules, but which are nevertheless prescribed by delicacy.

Here, definitions fail, and moral sentiment must enlighten us. What precepts cannot provide for, will be inspired by the in-

stinct of a virtuous heart, surer than all precepts. Delicacy is the flower of justice ; it evinces the life and fertility of the plant ; and when it withers, the sap has begun to dry up. Delicacy is justice in little things ; it therefore supposes, that our pure love for what is just, will give us more discrimination, and raise little things, by making them the occasions of virtue. Delicacy acquires peculiar merit from the nicety of discrimination which it supposes, and it is pure in proportion as it has no other witness than itself.

Independently of the outward integrity, which respects the rights established over material things, and which is merely the outside of justice, there is another kind of honesty, less known and more difficult ;—that which respects the dignity of others, and their happiness ; these are blessings, which do not strike the eye, but which, on this account, are more real and precious. Here, where civil law ceases, the power of virtue is displayed ; and here, justice has fewer securities than ever, if it be not supported by benevolence. You do not encroach upon another's patrimony. You do well ; but do you never cast a blemish upon the reputation he enjoys ? Do you never disturb his affections ? Do you never wound his heart with the arrows of envy and hatred ? Then only can you call yourself just. But you may ask how can we foresee the many ways, in which we may trouble our brother ? There is but one way ; we must love him sincerely : and if we would be perfectly just, we must know how to love.

Gratitude is another link between justice and love. It discharges, by means of the affections, those debts, which the affections alone can discharge, and which are so much the more sacred for this reason. Gratitude never springs up in the soil of selfishness ; for self-interest, in its eagerness to appropriate, is unable to understand the impulse of generosity which gives, or to measure the true value of the gift. And, when we do understand it, we must love much to be willing to accept : we

refuse when we love but little. Gratitude is as it were the justice of the heart.

We have said that a balance of interest does not constitute justice. But there is a kind of balance of interests which serves the end of equity; he who gains, will give equally to those who have the same wants, provided they also have the same claims; proportioning his gifts to wants and claims. It is benevolence, impartial benevolence, in its free exercise, bestowed according to the degrees of merit. It is a representation, or an extension of justice in the form of liberality, as gratitude is benevolence in the form of justice.

In short, justice does not merely command us to execute its decrees towards ourselves: it calls us also, as simple spectators, to another service; it commands us to be interested in its cause, although personally uninterested in its results; to sympathize deeply with the reprobation it pronounces against those who violate its laws; and more than this, if society itself does not take care to maintain its rights, it lays upon us the duty of defending them; it puts in our hands the protection of oppressed innocence: and it is *then* that justice shines in all its peculiar glory; for then it is eminently generous: no longer bearing the character of mere prudence which forbids us to injure—it commands us to assist. Animated and instinct with life, it stamped the heroic ages with an impress of glory. In the infancy of society, this commission given to courage by morality, supplied the place of codes and of civil authority. For the same reason it is reserved in times of trouble and disorder: consoling human nature by creating illustrious private virtues, in the midst of public calamities. In proportion as society is reformed or restored, this duty once laid upon all the good, progressively concentrates in magistrates; and hence the majesty and holiness of their office. Magistrates are the representatives and organs of public virtue; their authority is but a sacred duty; they carry in their hands the holy cup, which contains the greatest blessing of society, security and peace; and justice becomes in their

persons an active, energetic, untiring power. But it will only acknowledge him as its minister who imbibes its spirit, and who is generous as well as severe. It will not place its rights in impure hands. It will even impose silence upon the most lawful affections of his heart; for private affections would endanger that impartiality, which must protect equal rights. It requires much of him personally; sometimes to be inaccessible even to pity.

As the magistrate is the delegate of public justice, so the administrator directs social equity, by distributing the benefit which society designs for its members. What he gives is not his own; it is a deposit, which he transfers. Like the magistrate, he should be no respecter of persons, or rather his liberality should be particularly bestowed upon those who need it most; but to the virtues of the magistrate he should join that ardent zeal, that eager solicitude, which anticipates wants, and multiplies and prepares means of relief. The magistrate preserves, but it is for the administrator to create, and the love of excellence should be the genius which inspires his creations.

The private life of the magistrate and administrator is the pledge of their fidelity, in the exercise of these important offices. Private virtues add to the salutary effect of the decrees of the one and the deeds of the other. It is not enough that justice and equity are observed; the sentiment ought to be propagated in all hearts; these words should excite faith, wherever they are heard. The organs of public power should therefore find their means of success in the reputation they enjoy, and in the confidence they inspire. They do more than repress or regulate individual actions—they anticipate them, and provide for them beforehand;—and, worthy interpreters of good laws, it is theirs to lay the foundations of a sound public morality.*

* We may imprison him who injures us; but when an enemy is defenceless, he disarms our resistance, and his inferiority recommends him to our regard. Nothing then authorises the odious oppression of slavery:—and especially, nothing authorises it to those whom we have no pretence for considering our enemies.—How then can a man become the property of another man? The

CHAPTER III.

HOW THE LOVE OF EXCELLENCE PURIFIES THE AFFECTIONS.

WHAT is it to love? Can the heart that does not know virtue, know how to love truly? Does that attraction, which we feel towards the objects of our affections, deserve the name of love, if we are not attached to the good which is in them?

Love includes a mysterious sense, which corresponds to all that is most excellent in our nature. The love of our fellow-men is essentially moral; it is an overflowing and delicate sentiment, almost self-forgetfulness; an ardent desire for the happiness of others, a wish to sacrifice ourselves without restriction or reserve, to conceal sacrifice by sacrificing, and to deprive ourselves even of gratitude. It is impossible for love to arise and be freely developed in a soul unacquainted with morality. The sages of antiquity, struck with the universal power of love, but still more by the perfection of its principle, sought an origin for it beyond our nature, and assigned to it a divine character; thus foreseeing a truth, which Christianity has fully brought to light. A heart filled with the love of man, feels, at the sight of whatever is excellent, an emotion like that which the sweet remembrances of infancy cause; or like a traveller at the sight of his native land.

Love is then a kind of union between natural affection and virtue. In this noble union, virtue brings as a dowry its own

right of property results from natural equality alone: it is the consequence of reciprocal independence, and of the primitive right which the Creator has given to each one over himself. He, then, who would refuse such a right to his fellow being, would deny his own rights in their principle. There is no lawful or possible property over an individual, because every individual is his own property,—and this, before there were any other things.

elevation, stability and light ; its treasures and its charms. It delivers affection from agitating anxieties and injurious exactions ; communicates to it a singular frankness and fulness, an exquisite suavity ; raises it to all the dignity of reason ; and, by animating it with the liberty which quickens itself, associates affection with merit.

Simple natural inclinations are unsteady, because they are blind ; and are dissipated with the illusions which excited and cherished them ; they are enfeebled and exhausted by possession, and disenchanted by habit. Virtue, ever young, renews them incessantly, renders them constant as truth, equally holy as wisdom, and places round them an immutable guard. While appearing to moderate their transports, it preserves the secret fire of their energy ; by a provident economy, it restrains them, so as to make them more lasting, and refuses them only what would expose them to the bitterness of regret, and to mistakes, which are the consequences of error. There is almost always a secret self-interest in simple natural affection ; and hence the restless jealousy, which is alarmed at rival affections, because it wishes to possess alone ; which regards as infidelity, everything which is granted to others ; which always doubts, because there is no security for the monopoly to which it pretends. In virtuous love, on the contrary, entirely forgetting ourselves, we only exist in the beloved object, enjoying what we see him acquire, congratulating ourselves in the triumphs and affections he obtains, because they are just ; while the self-approval which accompanies it, gives it an entire security. Instinctive inclination agitates and consumes itself, while true love is nourished and rendered calm by exercise. The former has its tortures, which often make the sensibility of the heart the poison of human life ; the latter has celestial joys, which calm all fear, and make us forget all trouble.

Self-interest arms instinctive inclinations with envy, hatred, and injustice towards everything which is foreign to their objects ; enriching the beloved, rather with the spoils of others

than with their own gifts. Hence the hostile dispositions which are often found connected with warm affections, corrupting the character. But true love has no need of refusing to other men the affection which it grants to the privileged person ; for it draws from a source which cannot be exhausted. Its benevolence has all the calmness and security of the principle which is its life ; it does not wage war without ; it is nourished by all the affections, which, derived from the same origin, preserve the same character. Just in its preferences, it is also just towards those who are strangers to this preference ; for it is not an exclusion, but a choice. Inclination shuts itself up in a limited circle ; love spreads itself abroad ; inclination is associated with the passions ; love is the companion of duty.

The offerings of inclination are not sufficiently abundant and elevated to satisfy love, which would give without ceasing. It is true, that the transitory gifts of earth are rarely in the power of love, and can be conferred but once ; but virtue yields its treasures of an infinite value, which can be diffused perpetually ; viz. consolation, counsel, and example. The noblest gift which a man can offer to another, is confidence ; and this receives its value from virtue alone. Can the heart, which virtue does not animate, open itself with entire unreserve ? How can we reveal ourselves to another, when we dare not do so to ourselves ?

When poets have desired to paint the most exalted sentiment which can take possession of the heart, in which nature seems to display all its power, and over which the imagination and the senses exercise the most control, they have never dared to present its image separated from that of virtue. They too well know whence comes the life which should animate their pictures ;—and these pictures have been reproduced for so many ages, and in all languages been exhausted, and yet no human voice has been able to repeat the emotions which await the pure and innocent soul, when it meets on earth that soul,

which it has sought all over the earth, and chooses it among a thousand !

This love, unknown to the world, this treasure of hopes, nobler than all the promises of earth, this morning of a better life, which seems to render virtue more beautiful by rendering it accessible to the conceptions of feeble humanity, revealing it to all the faculties of our nature, this love, thus consecrated by virtue, triumphs over destiny, and keeps united those whom the chances of life separate, or permits them to be happy together, with a happiness, though serious, full of charms ; for there is happiness in sacrificing themselves together to the laws of duty ; and even hard necessity, explained to the disciple of virtue as a decree of Providence, loses its tyrannical character, and finds submission, where it might have produced despair.

Virtue, like a tender and vigilant mother, takes care of this sentiment, so liable to go astray, by putting it under the safeguard of severe manners. As the interpreter of nature, it makes it the preserver of family affections, and continues to connect with it the sweet bonds, by which new affections are developed. Going from under the paternal roof, it carries its household gods, and all is life and peace ; a new language is established between hearts, which already know so well how to understand each other. Two beings whose alliance is contracted under such auspices, are associated to become better ; when advanced in the career of life, they encourage and reward each other by turns, mingling noble sentiments and good actions, and adding this rich inheritance to the common patrimony. The look which they cast upon their children, animated by the celestial love of excellence, and more eloquent even than the maternal eye when it beams all its tenderness, expresses a gentle pride and elevated hopes, calling these dear beings into the paths of goodness, and seeing them enter with innocent joy. How beautiful is the family concert with its harmonizing voices ! How beautiful the celestial ray, which illumines the family group, descending upon the masterpiece of nature !

The love of excellence has the peculiar power of giving charms to what seems most common. The minute details, the daily and habitual duties, which make up domestic life, and which habit might render monotonous, which would destroy instinctive affection, and disenchant the illusions of imagination, receive an ever-renewing interest and charm from the love of excellence; offering to it occasions for self-sacrifice constant and unobserved, both in the present and future. Equity, confidence, and gratitude are there found mingled every moment, under a thousand forms, the veil of obscurity, which covers all these treasures, rendering them still more precious. They exist for all, particularly in the humblest dwelling; for the less we participate in earthly good, the more we can devote ourselves to one another by mutual sacrifices and the ineffable gifts of the heart.

‘There is friendship only among the good,’ said Cicero, whose meditations were enlightened by so great an experience of human things. Not that, besides simple associations formed for interest, there may not be established also a secret union of hearts, nourished by reciprocal and sincere devotion, of which the wicked themselves are sometimes capable. Conformity of taste, the relations of habit, create a kind of friendship, to which the laws of opinion give a foundation, and which cannot be relinquished without shame; to which honor imparts strength and constancy that feeling would not always be sufficient to preserve to them. But still this union is superficial. The love of excellence alone makes an intimate alliance of souls, because this alone brings to an alliance all that is noblest and deepest in the human faculties. When beings, who are destined to be blessed with real friendship, meet for the first time in the world, does it not seem that they find and recognize each other, as if an indistinct presentiment had announced them to one another? It is because each finds in the other the traits of that excellence, which was already the object of devotion; and on the friend thus chosen is bestowed a

portion of this devotion. A man may thus conceive for another a gratitude very superior to that which any other benefit could inspire ; for he may have received from him the benefit of his own improvement.

There is always a just timidity in regard to the internal assent of our own conscience ; its approbation does not satisfy us entirely, unless it is echoed by a friend. We may confide our faults in a superficial friendship, but it is merely to succeed in excusing them to ourselves, or, perhaps, it is to associate others with the passions which have caused them. In true friendship we confide them with an exquisite pleasure, partly, that we may amend them, and partly, to relieve our heart from the weight of remorse, not by stifling it, but by finding aid in repentance : it is an atonement and a consolation at the same time. It is true, that friendship would not consent that mutual sacrifices should be considered as obedience to the laws of duty ; it rather conceives them the exercise of a privilege. But in the sentiment of duty it finds a principle of faithfulness, which gives it a new security, as in the love of excellence it finds a kind of consecration. There is but one purer joy in friendship, than to see one whom we love do a noble action,—the pleasure of sharing it.

We have seen how these concentric circles, which compose the different orders of communities, in the bosom of human society, when mere interest inspires them, are only orbits where is displayed a kind of collective selfishness ; but substitute the love of excellence for this principle, and all these communities, instead of declaring war against each other, and putting themselves in a posture of defence, will be but one continued alliance, progressively developed upon the largest scale : a family bearing the image of country ; the same sentiment presiding over the successive associations, and bringing the same influences ; different communities being united in general society, by the same bond which attaches their members to one another. And as the love of excellence quickens domestic affec-

tion by private virtues, so by public virtues it will quicken devotion to one's country. We perceive the image of our country, standing upon the land and in the places where we received life; we hear its voice resound in the accents of our native tongue; for these maternal signs recount all its favors,—the education it has given, the protections with which it surrounds us, the laws which have been a kind of external lesson of morality, and the noble examples, which teach us still more. We must learn then how to love it, and to serve it in a spirit conformable to such recollections. When called to the honor of serving it indeed, we must have a conscience in politics, as we have a conscience in private life, and our conscience in politics will be the highest degree of justice, as well as of devotion. But the first sacrifice, which love of country will require, is perhaps that for which we are least prepared,—the sacrifice of personal vanity, and ambitious passions, and of that party spirit, which, by creating private coalitions in the bosom of general union, just sunders what it should unite.

Our country, without betraying what it owes to itself, cannot admit those to the honor of serving it, who do not obtain, from the love of excellence, this conscientious and consequently disinterested patriotism. In free states all the citizens share the same honor, according to their relative capacities, and liberty expects and supposes the devotion of all to the public good; and as it subsists only upon generous sentiments, so nothing is more favorable to keep up such sentiments in the heart. Society recognises its true friends in men of an elevated and truly honorable life only: its cause is better served by the example of good actions, than by the most eloquent discourses. In vain we may imagine the most learned combinations to supply the place of this disinterested devotion. If eagerness for personal enjoyment has relaxed public morals, the genius of selfishness, more skilful than that of the legislator, will deceive all calculations; for each one will study to sacrifice the least possible in obtaining the greatest part of

common profit ; and seeing nothing more certain than the present, when the country expects everything from the future, will calculate too well that power is the great instrument of satisfaction. Hence, where power is in question, there will be violent dispute ; if it is confirmed, there will be base flattery. Liberty can never be established, where cold self-interest is extolled, where disinterestedness and self-forgetfulness are thought to be illusions, or turned into ridicule. Athens had its laws, but it lost its liberty as soon as it listened to sophists.

In the same manner as the progress of civilisation takes from patriotism that savage character which treated every stranger as an enemy, and makes people understand that there is a great and indissoluble brotherhood between them, so also, the progress of the love of excellence teaches individuals to extend over all mankind those generous affections, which are already exercised in the private circle. The more enlarged the soul becomes by lofty inspirations, the more capable it is of embracing, in the sphere of its devotion, all those whose happiness it can promote. From the mouth of the author of 'Emile' those words came, which were received with so much eagerness by narrow hearts, and raised by them into an axiom, 'the friend of humanity must be the friend of no individual.' Surely he misunderstood the love of man, although he so many times lent his eloquent voice to the cause of virtue ; or he calumniated human nature, as he also calumniated civilisation, when in his sad and gloomy humors he seemed to fly from truth purposely, and take delight in paradox. O may that hypocrisy of generosity be withered, which 'feels for all except that which is in contact with it !' The rays of the sun traverse the spheres which surround it, although they reach far off into space. The name of *human race* does not express a cold abstraction merely ; nor do our fellow creatures cease to be so, because they bear an unknown name ; nor do the services we render them lose their value, because a great number enjoy them. Were Vincent de Paule, who adopted unknown and

forsaken children, and loaded himself with the irons of the guilty,—and Howard, who traversed the world, seeking the unfortunate to console, and the repentant to encourage,—were these men flattered with idle speculations? If we are incapable of understanding how the living principle, which quickens all private affections, is the same which creates such glorious enterprises as these, it is because we do not understand love, and conceive private affections to be only the impulse of an instinctive sympathy. Those who truly love, go from the intimate communion of friendship, still more ardent to consecrate themselves to the happiness of their race; and returning from the labor of this great task, enjoy intimacy with more delight. The means of contributing to it are indeed sparingly given to the ordinary conditions of life; fortune favors those to whom it has granted a larger share of influence over the destiny of others. But what is the need of waiting for this influence from the favors of fortune? Has not God bestowed such a power upon the obscurest individual, who is clothed with no authority, and disposes of no treasure, but to whom the love of excellence is enough to accomplish a work, which the great of the earth have rarely attempted? At his voice, in his presence, sentiments arise in the heart, which are worthy of answering to his own; he moves everything by the strength of the conviction with which he is filled; useful establishments, dedicated to science and virtue, adorning society much better than the monuments of art, rise up at his bidding; the example of his good actions is transmitted to posterity; from one extremity of the globe to the other he finds emulators. While political passions divide the great human family, the votaries of excellence, in the midst of the tumult, still prepare the blessings of peace, and relieve the victims of discord.

O you, to whom this magnificent mission is entrusted, be not checked by the icy opinions of a world which does not understand you! Disdain the maxims of that false wisdom, which pretends to class the end to which you aspire with chi-

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meras ; and dare to exercise a love beyond their comprehension. Courageous missionaries of truth and beneficence ! Continue to distribute everywhere these salutary fruits, to scatter afar and around you their seeds, adopting beforehand all future generations, by a paternity of soul ! At the sight of you, selfishness is astonished and irritated ; and although frivolous vanity may not even perceive you, the good honor, and posterity will bless you ; for history, at last, as its most worthy ministry, will honor itself by honoring the memory of those whom Heaven alone can adequately reward !

CHAPTER IV.

GOODNESS OF HEART.

OF all traits of character, there is none so well understood, and so generally agreed upon, as goodness of heart. Our ideas of justice are modified by interest, party spirit, and prejudice ; but goodness of heart unites all suffrages, clashing with no interest, always giving and never taking away, and never severe even under injury. Moreover, the weaker we are, the more we feel its value, for the more we receive its protection ; we do not merely behold it, we are affected by it. We may judge of it without profoundness of understanding or prior experience ; indeed we feel and enjoy rather than judge of it. Finding ourselves at ease under its influence, we are ever charmed at its approach, as if it were a propitious guardian. In its simplicity and truth it attracts admiration ; while it escapes envy, and disarms criticism. Is there a state of society in which *good nature*, or goodness of heart united to candor, may be exposed to ridicule ? Are there men so degenerate as to fancy themselves high enough to disdain it ? O then may en-

lightened and general philosophy takes it name, to reestablish it in honor ; confide it to true hearts, and shelter it from the profanations of levity and egotism !

Among the ancients, goodness had a deeper meaning than with us ; it expressed attachment to virtue itself, including benevolence towards other men as its consequence. This definition is also the only just one. Attachment to virtue itself should never be separated from benevolence towards man, or we take from goodness its moral character, and consequently the fruitful principle from which all its efforts proceed. Goodness of heart is accompanied by so ingenuous a manner, that we are commonly led to take it for an entirely natural disposition ; and this is so true, that those to whom we attribute a goodness that is rather acquired than innate, sometimes think the praise is weakened, as if our supposition caused a doubt about their sincerity ; and that, in implying merit, we necessarily suppose art. The truth is, nature does invite us to be good, and did we but listen, we might without effort follow its advice, and it would seem like yielding to our inclination. But this happy disposition is but too soon corrupted by the numerous solicitations of personal feeling, or the influences of worldly intercourse, and especially by the inquietudes of self-love. It is therefore necessary that the pure love of excellence should attack these destructive agents in their principle, in order to preserve and build up the work of nature. Several instinctive inclinations, which take the form of goodness of heart, might also, by being confounded with it, turn it from its end and destroy its character. In distinguishing true goodness of heart from false, we discover, that the first owes the fundamental conditions, which constitute it, to a reflective principle. He only is really good towards other men, who feels deeply what is praiseworthy in itself, and with whom goodness is not only a quality but a virtue. There is something which passes for goodness of heart, that is in reality weakness ; it is unequal and idle ; being rather an ostentatious display than positive action.

Good will is abandoned to a blind guide, which does not proceed from the depth of the soul, but springs from mere temperament and humor.

Weakness resembles goodness of heart in not loving to refuse solicitation ; but goodness of heart goes farther ; it seeks the needy, and anticipates solicitation ; yet it can refuse when greater service can be done by refusal. Weakness resembles goodness of heart in not desiring to irritate ; but this condescension is servile, and springs only from fear ; it dares not contradict ; while the condescension of goodness of heart springs from fearing to refuse ; it does not fear to displease ; it can face resistance to carry relief, and in its zeal conquers everything. Weakness is moved in favor of the fortunate and powerful ; while goodness of heart interposes with courage between the force which opposes and the forsaken being who yields, and braves everything when it may protect.

Nor is it to be really good, to be so towards some persons, or in some instances only. The nature of goodness of heart is to be as universal as it is constant. Other virtues permit repose after effort, and are only exercised at times ; goodness of heart neither admits of relaxation, nor has extraordinary flights ; resembling justice in making no exception of persons ; and its preferences being in favor of those, who suffer or who have need of support ; as if it were sent by Providence to restore the equilibrium, that is disturbed by the chances of human life. Goodness of heart is a domestic virtue ; it always dwells with us ; especially in the most familiar, habitual and obscure relations of life, and this is what renders it most difficult. We are opposed and deceived by men, events, all that is external ; and within, a thousand secret causes excite discontent and chagrin. How, under so many capricious influences, can this equable disposition be preserved ? There is only one way : we must deliver the soul itself from internal agitation ; direct our eyes incessantly to a horizon more elevated than the scene of daily circumstances ; and live in that region of Love where flows

unmingled serenity. Truth and duty are alone immutable, and nothing is sustained in the character, which is not founded on them. There is no perfect consistency, but that which rests upon enlightened conviction; even habit is not enough, for habit, being connected with daily circumstances, is disconcerted by unexpected temptations. The man, who lavishes external professions, may deceive himself, as well as those to whom he addresses them. He may really feel at the moment what he expresses, although he does not foresee what he may be called upon to do, to prove their reality: the sacrifice is not yet present to his thoughts. At the sight of a fellow being, the first emotion of all of us can be no other than a spontaneous sentiment of benevolence, which bursts forth of itself. The profession of this, however, becomes a deceitful promise, and produces hollow words, when goodness has not those deep roots in the heart, which the love of virtue would implant there.

Goodness of heart is eager to act and produce; it seeks not its own gratification, or the suffrage of others, but the real fruits, which are to conduce to the general happiness. It has an industry, which is peculiar to itself; inexhaustible in invention and resources. The good nature which stops at external professions, is often but the desire to please, the offspring of vanity, coveting the honors of goodness of heart, without accepting its burthens; or a kind of selfishness, which has recourse to false allurements, that it may obtain the easier conquest. Goodness of heart is not in the least mercenary; it might be called impartial and general generosity. It does not aspire to be noticed; it even loves to disguise itself, and hardly is conscious of its own existence. It does not repel gratitude, while gratitude presents itself as a return for affection; but it flies from it, when it takes the form of acquittal of debt. Such a mercenary return would take away its enjoyment with its merit. Goodness of heart can be generous, even in consenting to accept a service; for to please others sometimes involves sacrificing one's pride;

and we must feel within us a very great depth of love, to bind ourselves to be grateful. We may refuse a favor from a feeling of just dignity ; but we sometimes refuse, because we have too narrow a heart to acquit ourselves.

Far from being liberal with professions like the worldly, the good often seem sparing of them. They avoid all kind of ostentation. They have a certain gravity and reserve ; being occupied with an all-absorbing sentiment, they are sometimes even rough and severe : to the superficial they may appear cold, but everything betrays them to the eyes of the attentive. He who understands them from sympathy, sees that they are quiet to meditate and prepare their touching dispensations ; that they are collecting themselves to act better. They are serious because they are true ; and when they break silence, their words are actions, that have an unexpected value and power, penetrating to the depth of the soul, and carrying with them confidence and repose ; appeasing the storms of passion ; and soothing the deepest sorrows. Justice may give to society that imperfect peace, which consists in the cessation from war : it is contented with staying the arms of men, that are ready to injure one another. Goodness of heart consummates the treaty, by extinguishing animosities and inviting men to help each other. The calmness of its innocence is diffused over everything around. Its attractive power draws after it the beings whom it envelopes ; uniting them by the same tie, with which it binds them to itself. Justice says, ' Lay down your arms ;' goodness of heart says, ' Love one another ;' and it can convince by saying so. Beneficence relieves indigence ; goodness of heart has comfort for all the troubles of the soul ; it is the angel of consolation and hope ; it does more than relieve misfortune ; it teaches how to support it ; it reanimates the being, who is laid low by adversity, communicating to him its own moral life ; it bestows upon men the greatest of blessings ; it makes them love virtue.

From that active industry, which goodness of heart incessant-

ly creates, and from that desire that it has of remaining unknown, arises the delicacy which is its ornament and distinctive sign. With what a true instinct the good discern what may be useful to another, or what may please ; and how they may conceal their own movements from those whom they serve. What value, consequently, they give to the slightest things ! making them agreeable and elevated in proportion as they communicate to them all their worth. We recognise goodness of heart by those little evidences of foresight, which tender affection or perfect disinterestedness alone can suggest ; as we detect the hand of the great artist by certain strokes, which, though mere touches, betray profound meditation on the beautiful.

There are three emanations from the vital principle of goodness of heart ; tolerance, indulgence, and condescension ; in all of which the love of excellence triumphs over the greatest barriers that separate men. We are liable to confound tolerance with indulgence : sometimes thinking ourselves indulgent when we only tolerate ; sometimes excusing ourselves for being intolerant, under the pretext of being only just. Tolerance is only patience in bearing what opposes our inclinations, tastes, opinions, or habits ; while indulgence is the disposition to pardon injuries. Now self-love inclines us to think that others injure, when they oppose us. And as we condemn, as so many errors, the opinions which differ from ours, so we condemn, as so many failings and faults, the actions which displease us, or even the little instances of neglect, which incommode us. The intolerant man thinks himself better than his fellows, or at least wishes to appear so ; he is severe, that he may have a right to be harsh ; he wishes to be honored for his very exactions, and to command the respect of others even in satisfying his own inclinations. The love of power, arising from a blind pride, makes use of intolerance as of the most effectual instrument to work out its ends ; and thus it becomes the tyranny of selfishness.

Intolerance takes its haughty and intractable character from pride as a fountain, and because it is pride in action, it is irritable, and easily disturbed by what is most harmless ; considering independence as a revolt against its pretensions ; raising itself into a rule ; taking the form of law, and endeavouring to raise a sense of obligation as a means of power. Equity alone, and the most rigorous equity can prevent such usurpation ; for tolerance is only a recognition of that independence, which is equally granted to all men. And what is our title to this superiority, in which we dare to take pride ? Presumptuous confidence in our own reason is rather a probable indication of error, than a title to merit the confidence of others ; for it is the most frequent cause of error, and the most common obstacle to the discovery of truth. Truth and wisdom do not recognise their disciples by that bitter and absorbing zeal, which, so far from serving their cause, makes it misunderstood, and would render it odious, if it were possible, by substituting oppression and violence for the gentle influence of enlightened and free conviction. Pride, however, destroys the sentiment of this equity, and proscribes the maxims of good sense ; and so deeply does tolerance wound pride in its last recesses, that alone among the virtues, it has been denied the name of virtue by means of paradoxes, elevated into doctrines. The tolerance, which bears faults of character has even been recommended beyond that which bears opinions, although faults of character are in themselves always reprehensible, while opinions are free and may be sincere. But we submit much sooner to be wounded in our interests, than in our vanity ; and tolerance of opposite opinions is freedom from the most subtle vanity. Tolerance has open and arrogant enemies, whom its gentleness, and patience, and calmness cannot disarm, but seem to encourage, and whom its name alone seems to offend as a reproach. Do we not see crowds of servile beings range themselves round the oppressor, and against that virtue which would protect them ? O let goodness of heart arm itself with courage, and

employ all its power to destroy this offspring of human vanity, and to dissipate the fatal intoxication of those men, who are so preoccupied with themselves! Let it unveil this selfishness; let it attack it in this new retreat, where it strengthens itself to go out, conqueror and persecutor; that truth and goodness, honored for their own sake, and by a reverence worthy of them, may not be profaned by becoming the instruments of ambitious passion! Learning to live in others, let us learn to comprehend, that their tastes, ideas, and caprices, perhaps even their prejudices, have a right to our regard; that the uneasiness and restraint, which they impose upon us, are a sacrifice which we owe them. Let us learn how to free ourselves from the exactions, that our own habits have imposed upon us. Then, without knowing it, and without pretending to it, we shall perhaps more easily, and at least much more lawfully, obtain that influence which we are so eager to exercise; and our influence will be respected, because it will be founded upon confidence. The art of persuading supposes the art of entering into the sentiments of others, rather than that of transmitting the sentiments which we wish them to adopt. Even if we have the eye of the most experienced observer, with difficulty we escape from that natural disposition of the mind, which makes us judge of others by ourselves. We only know those well whom we love, and the love of man is the guiding light, which introduces us to the knowledge of the human heart. We sometimes submit to him who is only directed by personal interest, if he is powerful and strong; but we only trust those, who are animated by a sincere zeal for the interests of others.

We are generally more indulgent to the faults which only offend the laws of morality, than those which offend ourselves. The first indulgence is easier, and costs us little; it is however less just. We have a right to forgive what personally attacks us,—a noble prerogative of which goodness of heart shows us all the value, and which pardon exercises! Even selfish morality counsels us to refrain from revenge, when it cannot obtain

satisfaction ; and exercises external pardon, when he who grants it may profit by the gratitude of him who receives it ; but the pardon of the heart, the sacrifice of all secret resentment,—what power can produce it, if it be not that of an essentially generous sentiment, which renders us capable of an entire self-forgetfulness? Simple natural affection enjoys the power of relieving from the weight of regret him who has wounded us ; re-establishing the bond which the offence had broken, and making it still closer. It is to open our arms to him, who has been separated from us a moment, and to give assurance to him, whom our presence disturbs. The joy of two countrymen who meet in a remote country is less transporting than the reconciliation of two brothers. But if the author of the offence is himself without regret, and the pardon is to remain unknown, even to him who receives it ; or if it is without value in his eyes ; a more elevated motive will be necessary for a generosity which finds no recompense but in itself. Now there is nothing more frequent ;—for a kind of generosity is also requisite to accept a pardon, and it is often received with less gratitude than a simple favor. Nothing troubles men more, than what reveals to them their own faults, because they are humiliated by them. The indulgence is repelled, which, if it do not contain a reproach, at least contains a censure ; we might even say that we would rather pardon others the offences we have received from them, than the misfortune of having been exposed to our own injustice ; we revenge upon them the remorse that torments ourselves, or we seek to turn aside its point, to justify ourselves in our own eyes, by finding those guilty, whom we have injured. Often we were only imprudent in wounding them, and became unjust through the pride which wished to excuse itself.

To remember an offence, after having pardoned it, is a thing which can be reconciled doubtless with sincere pardon, and may even reproduce and continue its generosity. Yet perfect goodness of heart requires an entire forgetfulness of the of-

fence ; the indulgence, which cannot be accompanied by forgetfulness, is not sufficiently secure ; it seems to threaten some return of resentment ; it would be a sort of ostentation of virtue to repeat the pardon every day. The delicacy of goodness refuses to carry so far the merit of its liberality ; it effaces from the memory the image of wrongs, that no traces of them may remain.

How serious do vices and simple failings appear in those we do not love ! and how excusable they seem if we find them in our friends ! Thus we bend morality to the pleasure of our affections, when our affections ought to acknowledge the supremacy of morality.

The judgment which an impartial and disinterested spectator passes upon a fault, committed by another man, is a complex judgment, including the appreciation of a duty which has been violated, and an opinion upon the real culpability of him who has erred. Worldly indulgence confounds these two things : by having easy notions of duty, it consents to be less severe upon persons. Still we must be thankful to it for this concession ; for there is nothing so common in the world, as the union of great weakness in principle and great rigor in application. By the first, self-condemnation is avoided ; by the second, the pleasure of censuring is reserved, by which vanity is highly gratified ; for in censuring others we always exalt ourselves. It is quite otherwise with virtuous indulgence ; this decides with repugnance, and cautiously makes use of sentences which affect individuals. It can compassionate weakness, unsteadiness, and ignorance ; but a holy indignation takes possession of it at the presence of vice : the love of excellence, which is its principle, is also the horror of evil. We must, therefore, know how to excuse those who err, without letting our earnestness for the cause of duty abate. Power, fortune, and glory are titles to favor with worldly indulgence, which easily excuses brilliant faults, and those which are followed by success ; and even pardons the corruption, which is accompanied by spirit and gracefulness. Virtuous in-

dulgence does not admit of this compromise. Vice, in its eyes, is *never* in good taste. It revolts against it when powerful, by force or by opinion; and though generous, is neither fawning nor mercenary. It reserves itself for those, who, having less understanding and assistance, are more excusable; and for those whose examples are less contagious. The indulgence of virtue goes further still; the criminal himself, avowed and acknowledged as such, is not excluded from it; in him it still sees a man, and of all men the most unfortunate; in his heart it perceives the power of repentance; while assisting him, it conceives the hope of producing a kind of moral resurrection; it has affections pure and generous enough to penetrate the impure atmosphere of crime, and into the corrupted heart to diffuse healing influences. Even in those cases where human justice must punish, virtuous indulgence may compassionate; reanimating, reconciling, and bringing back in triumph a conquest to human nature. Thus goodness of heart is heroic also, descending into the dungeons to which society has banished those whom it rejects. In the midst of those degenerate beings it truly appears a messenger from Heaven, promising and announcing the pardon which society refuses; teaching men to obtain from chastisement a means of expiation and reform. And is it impossible, that he whom it finds guilty, should become through repentance a model which the good themselves may emulate?

In these efforts to raise the criminal from the abyss of vice, the sublimest condescension is united with the heroism of indulgent goodness. Condescension is an emotion peculiar to the good, who love to stoop, that they may be within the reach of those with whom they communicate, and render the intercourse useful; for we are only truly useful by the help of confidence; and confidence is gained by making use of self-love, under the condition at least of an apparent equality. Zeal for excellence is therefore the inspiration of goodness of heart. Real superiority alone can stoop thus to raise to itself those with whom

it communicates. This is its privilege, and the only privilege which virtuous superiority accepts. Vain mediocrity torments itself to attain a false elevation; and brings down others, that it may be great by comparison. Is there a more lovely sight, than to see old age sporting with ingenuous infancy? It is the purest image of condescension; for it comprises all the concessions which condescension can make. When condescension relieves misfortune, it avoids the forms of protection; when it enlightens ignorance, it avoids dogmatism; when it teaches duty, it softens its austerity; and it becomes humble with the weak, as if it shared their weakness. To bear impertinence without impatience, is a very obscure, but it is a very meritorious sacrifice, because very difficult, and very necessary; but there is another, perhaps rarer and harder, which people of mind impose upon themselves, when they consent to bear the tedious conversation of common men; this sacrifice has the more value, that it is more unknown, and is a secret which cannot be suspected by any but those who have the courage to make it. Such a sacrifice, however, by men distinguished for their mind and knowledge, is not only a praiseworthy action, but a real duty; for it is the only way they can employ the gifts which have been bestowed upon them in the service of others. We must be willing to grow weary with the ignorant, if we wish to enlighten them, and to keep up that intercourse of affection, which the feeling of superiority would infallibly break up; because superiority would touch upon that which would most effectually humiliate those whom we treat as inferiors.

If goodness of heart seems to acquire a greater value in persons elevated in rank and dignity, it is because it supposes on their part a greater condescension. And their station gives them a privilege indeed, when it becomes a means of rendering the images of goodness more perceptible to men! But they alone obtain this privilege, whose condescension is derived from real goodness of heart.

Is there not a condescension of moral superiority also, which takes delight in disguising its own grandeur without losing its dignity, and thus puts itself within reach of the weak, by seeming to become their equal, and thereby establishes with them an intercourse of confidence and freedom, that raises them insensibly to itself? There are some people who may seem good through artifice. And condescension, when inspired by goodness of heart, in its perfect disinterestedness practises what is suggested by the desire of popularity; for as the great disguise themselves when they seek pleasure, so condescension is the recreation of virtue.

It will be said, perhaps, that the subject we have just treated is exhausted. But he who thinks there is nothing more to be said about goodness of heart, if he meditate deeply upon this noble subject, and afterwards examine himself faithfully, will perhaps acknowledge, that there still remains much, in order to realize all which it comprises. We may attain it by freeing ourselves from the obstacles and fetters which prevent it from being developed, rather than by fatiguing ourselves by direct efforts to excite it. The serenity, which a pure conscience diffuses in the soul, naturally disposes us to benevolence; nothing preventing us more from being tolerant, indulgent, and condescending to others, than to be ill at ease with ourselves.

CHAPTER V.

OF FALSE SENSIBILITY.

SOME persons, who are good, do not seem to have much sensibility, and persons of sensibility are not always faithful to goodness of heart. These phenomena are explained by the preceding observations. Sensibility conduces to goodness of

heart, but does not constitute it ; it is a generous disposition natural to the affections : but goodness of heart requires something more than the affections ; and its generosity is more entire, in that it has a moral principle. We must take care lest we mistake the characteristics of sensibility and the signs which announce it ; for sometimes these signs are deceptive, and these characteristics imperfect : there is a false sensibility, which may be taken for the true, even by people themselves, and which serves too often as a mask for a real indifference of heart, which is unconsciously confirmed, since those who are selfish in reality often have the credit of liberal affections ; to hear them, one might sometimes think they were sinking under the weight of oppressive emotions. Nor is this very wonderful ; for if the imagination easily deceives us about material and external facts, over which we have so much control, and which we have the power to test, how much greater may be our delusions with respect to the purely internal matters which belong to the affections ! Within, facts and images are placed in the same light ; the means of distinguishing them are few, and not well known, and must be very delicately employed. Thus, exaltation of mind seems to be often confounded with the emotions of the soul, and a factitious softness with sincere affection. The heart often takes a less or greater part in these dispositions at their beginning ; but the imagination, when it takes possession of them at their source, makes them unnatural, while pretending to improve them. There are four kinds of illusions, which are derived from this source.

The first is produced by the habit of occupying the imagination with persons and situations arbitrarily conceived ; by turning our eyes from the scenes of real life, and fixing them upon those of a purely ideal world. Nothing is easier than to create persons and situations most likely to excite warm interest ; and we may renew this interest by surprise, and redouble it by all kinds of anxieties, terrors and contrasts. As long as such an entertainment is regarded as a mere entertainment, it is inno-

cent, and may sometimes be useful, being, as it were, an anticipated experience of life; and especially, if the creations bear any analogy with the real circumstances which await us, prepare the heart for supporting and enjoying them. But it is very different if these pictures have no relation with events which may occur; or even if the dimensions and coloring are exaggerated; for when returning to the realities of life, everything will appear colorless and cold. And what care soever we may take to bring back images to the rigorous exactness of their models, from the very fact of their being images they lose those asperities, which wound us in our contact with things: the rock, though imperfectly polished by the chisel, seems smooth in the distance. The exertion the mind makes, in conceiving them, communicates to these images an artificial brilliancy, which does not proceed from themselves, but from us. Our mind interposes a kind of medium, which, like the transparency of air or crystal, increases their brightness. They have a kind of lightness, which prevents us from foreseeing how heavy would be their reality. They are transient, and do not try our constancy.

It is to this disposition of mind, that we give the name of romantic sensibility; it is a disposition especially cherished by the literature of the present day; it is also cherished by that vague melancholy, which proceeds from satiety and from the mistakes we make in our intercourse with the world, and by that secret desire for activity, which can find nothing to satisfy it. A great number of individuals, discontented with their situation, and confined by social bonds in the narrow limits of the condition which has fallen to their lot, by a natural reaction seek refuge in an ideal world; and this they do with ardor proportionate to their intellectual culture, and to the multiplicity of their social relations, which render them more capable of comparing what they want with what they possess, and of feeling the immense disproportion.

The love of excellence is the only preventive against these

corruptions. Always guided by reason and seeking its light, it attaches itself to truth as to a duty ; and being constantly directed to what is practical, it is naturally brought back to the lessons of experience. It will not only perceive the natural interest of things, but it will sometimes animate what appeared cold and sad in reality, with the thoughts which are its end, and which lead us to discover an unknown value in it. It will conceal by its patience and indulgence what wounds and appears hard. It will prevent or cure the moral diseases, which led us to have recourse to illusions as a relief. It will free us from those vacant moments, which must be filled up at any rate. It will convert into useful actions that secret inquietude, which torments and consumes a soul of great capacity, as yet incapable of knowing or acting itself out. It will calm that discontent, which the sight of happier and more brilliant situations causes in those who are less favored ; inducing them to accept with resignation, and even with gratitude and joy, the more modest, but, perhaps, preferable rank, which Providence has assigned them. To that fruitless and gloomy melancholy, which uneasiness of heart engenders, will succeed a more expansive and gentle sentiment. When we are tempted to complain of life as of a heavy burthen, let us look around and observe all the wants, which implore our assistance, the laudable enterprises to which nothing is wanting but men who can devote themselves to their accomplishment. Let us observe the estimable and forsaken, whom we may console and make our friends. We shall find that we have not time, nor strength enough for all who need us. We complain of the mistakes we make. There is a career that is ever open in which there are no mistakes ; the career of excellence ; for, if man cannot attain the end entirely, he has at least satisfaction in his efforts. The void, of which we complain, is not the void of existence, but the void of our own hearts. Instead of accusing destiny, let us accuse our blindness and guilty indifference.

Sensibility, led astray by the imagination, sometimes transfers to outward signs what it should give to the objects themselves ; and hence arises a second kind of illusion. Signs are intended to quicken the affections, by awakening the idea of their objects, or the relations which exist between these objects and ourselves ; but the sign too often takes the place of the thing signified, in vivid and exalted imaginations. Such is the origin of all superstitions, and sensibility has its share in them. We tremble at the sight of blood, and shudder at hearing groans and cries ; we wander around tombs, and think and call ourselves full of sensibility ; yet we do not penetrate into the secret of silent troubles, which are always deepest ; we do not recognise grief, except in the robes of mourning. We carefully collect everything which calls back the remembrance of absent friends, and we are cold and neglect them when they are present. We lavish our compassion upon physical sufferings, and hardly suspect those sufferings of the soul, which have a right to a more generous sympathy.

The virtue which goes directly on to its end, disperses vain shadows ; attaches itself to persons ; penetrates reality ; examines wants, and determines results. The sensibility, which it nourishes, dwells in the soul ; it therefore knows all its secrets ; is interested in it, and brings it assistance. To the virtuous, sentiment is not recreation, but the voice of humanity itself ; and in their opinion the value of affection lies in the manner in which it exercises itself ; and they are only satisfied by the proofs it can give of sincerity.

The third kind of illusion arises from the influence which everything that is surrounded with splendor, exerts over the imagination. We then confound the liveliness of impression received from such pictures, with the emotions that belong to those benevolent affections, which the sentiment of esteem so profitably cherishes. This factitious sensibility sympathizes with the joys and sorrows of those who occupy the first rank : it is excited by success, and moved in the cause of favor and

powers ; carrying its affections as a tribute to the idols of fame ; disdaining the humble and obscure. Flatterers are more honest than we suppose ; they have a real affection for power. Nothing is more reasonable than to enjoy the honors with which a friend is invested, especially if he has deserved them ; we enjoy them, because we cherish his person, and are happy at his prosperity. But, if we sound the depths of our hearts, shall we not sometimes discover, that we love a friend more, when he is favored by fortune and glory ? It is the decoration, which enhances his value, and seems to make us discover in him new qualities. We require illustrious misfortunes, no less in the world, than in tragedy, to move us. Yet what talisman can those employ, whom the chances of life, and the cruel injustice of opinion have affected, and who have the most sacred rights over our hearts, if our attention is so absorbed by outward splendor ? What will become of the domestic affections, whose exercise must be constant and unnoticed ? Theatrical decorations have disappeared ; there are no more historical personages ; we have come down to vulgar realities.

Is nothing brilliant or attractive, unless it be out of the common course ? If exaltation of mind can only be produced by what is extraordinary, it is natural that it should be slight in common situations, and entirely pass away by continued experience. Now, it is when there is no excitement, that virtue appears in all its power. It gently lifts the veil of obscurity and modesty ; it teaches us to love our fellow beings for their own sakes, and to cherish them most when they have most need of us ; when they are humble and discontented, and when our love can indemnify them for the inattention of others.

The last kind of illusion is more delicate and subtle in its origin ; it has a less disagreeable character than the preceding ; but it exerts a more fatal influence. It proceeds from the part which the imagination takes in the charm produced by models of the beautiful. The sentiment of the beautiful is of itself eminently pure and true ; it is moral, and one

of the noblest branches of the sensibility of the soul. In natural affections there is a hidden harmony, which accords with what constitutes the beautiful in every thing; and their effects mutually assist each other; and such is the influence of virtue, because it gives the love of the beautiful its true direction. But the presence of beauty kindles a fire in the mind, of which the imagination is the focus; this excitement increases, when the image of the beautiful is reproduced in perceptible objects, and borrows the vividness of their tints; for it then seems like the sentiment itself; it even surpasses it in ardor; and the sentiment becomes cold in comparison. Soon the emotion becomes a want; it henceforth seems necessary for directing and keeping up the affections. It will then be requisite, that the objects offered to our most serious affections be elegant, that the scenes where our benevolence is implored be picturesque in their effect, and that the relations of life take a poetic aspect; and even grief must be graceful to excite our sympathy. But can those, with whom we live, habitually interest us by this magic charm? Common intercourse gives rise to a thousand discords; proximity makes the harmony of the whole disappear; familiarity disenchant; the picture which is too near our eye has no effect.

Youth in its flower, and beauty adorned with all the gifts of nature, borne upon a triumphal car, attract towards them a train of these false affections, and we think we love what pleases us. Talent is also a beauty as well as a power; it therefore has its admirers and flatterers, who think they are the friends of its possessor. We mistake our impassioned tastes for affections. There are some parents who prefer the deformed child, but not all. Is not our attachment to a friend put to the proof when we discover him to be ridiculous? Poverty clothed in rags, suffering in all its painful expressions, and the sight of human misery seen face to face, will dissipate that speculative sensibility, which seeks in scenes of misfortune a subject for the pencil of the artist.

Experience teaches us, that the charms of music, too fre-

quently enjoyed, throw the mind into a vague and idle reverie, and the soul into a soft languor. The same may be said in respect to the habit of too frequent contemplation of all the productions of art. We are in like danger in respect to the emotions which the beauties of nature cause, if we suffer these emotions to be confounded with the moral indolence of the soul. A man, who composes or dreams in idyls, who wanders enamored upon the borders of a solitary brook, will return to his family with a cold heart, or in a peevish humor.

If we examine these different kinds of false sensibility, we shall find, that they have one peculiarity in common; they all conceal a secret selfishness under apparent disinterestedness. To take to ourselves the charm of affection, without submitting to its conditions, some of which are hard, is like gathering the flower without having contributed to enriching the soil, where the plant grows; it is like taking pleasure without purchasing it by any sacrifice, or rendering it profitable to others. It is a kind of mental sensuality, not so gross as bodily, but yet selfish, and therefore more liable to deceive us. But the wise man is careful not to blame all kinds of exaltation. Far from despising the value of a legitimate enthusiasm, it is on the contrary from his very appreciation of it, that he more rigidly preserves it from profanation. He knows that this generous principle is the soul of all noble actions, and of all great thoughts; but he also knows, that a just and enlightened inspiration can be the fruit only of reflection and experience; that it is cultivated by truth, and is faithful to nature. Now false exaltation shares all the caprices of the faculty from which it emanates; it is changeable, because novelty is an illusion which often heightens, and fills the place of all other illusions of the imagination; the cause of its fluctuations exists in itself; it has its intoxication, its fits, and its delirium; it also has its anomalies, its repose, and its faintings; and when it abandons to himself the imprudent being who has given himself up to it, he is motionless and lifeless, seeing nothing around him but vacancy and the horror of darkness.

CHAPTER VI.

ON RECTITUDE OF INTENTION.

THOSE who desire excellence alone truly know what they desire ; and it is because a pure love of excellence is so rare, that we so often see, at the foundation of human will, so little simplicity of purpose. When we are exhausting ourselves in acquiring that external good which generally offers itself in a material and sensible form, we fancy that we are pursuing something determinate and positive ; and with what a disdainful smile do men, thus preoccupied, look upon all ambition, which tends to the acquisition of riches purely moral ! Themselves alone, as they think, are in possession of real riches ; alone exempt from illusions : they do not give themselves up, they say, to vague and idle speculations ; what they mean to obtain is present, manifest to all eyes, definite ; they alone attach themselves to what is real.

We do not mean to dispute, however, that fortune, power, or pleasure, may become distinct, clear, and positive, as objects of life ; but we think it may be doubted, whether the sworn votaries of these have generally any clear and precise idea of what constitutes their value. A peculiar and intrinsic value does not exist in power and fortune. They are only useful as instruments ; but they are important as instruments, and universally applicable ; and in this relation are therefore worthy of much pains to obtain, although their valuation is more difficult to calculate. They are often pursued, however, as if they were something in themselves. With the ambitious, as well as with the avaricious, the means become the end, and the object is acquired to be possessed rather than to be employed. But whether power is sought as the means of riches, or for the pur-

poses of ambition, pleasure is the last term, the definite end, to which everything tends. And what is this pleasure? What is its nature? When will it commence? How long will it endure? Will it be agitation or repose? the pleasure of sense or of vanity? And suppose we have a capacity of receiving it, will it remain with us? Do not the pleasures of sense and vanity often oppose each other? Do not men often degrade to enrich themselves, and impoverish themselves to satisfy their pride? And if they can define the intermediate end, can they define the definite end to which these realities of which they are so confident, are to serve as an introduction? What then are these realities of which they boast? They shine upon the eye; we can, perhaps, weigh them against each other; but we cannot estimate their value, for it is a relative one. Men speak of interest as the grand motive of action, as if nothing was so easily determined as interest; but considering the various elements, of which it is composed, what calculation is so difficult? And even were moral principle absent, it is doubtful whether interest could become the chief motive. It is often sacrificed to opinion; often to habit; sometimes to cowardice; sometimes to pride; and even to a carelessness which is not less frequent than extravagant.

Besides, the generality of men preserve some moral intentions. There is a necessity of being just; and the intention to be just is preserved and cultivated by calculation and social intercourse, and often procures pleasures that are obtained at little cost; and experience constantly increases the power of these pleasures as motives of action. Most men, however, attempt to associate their moral intentions with personal ambition, and would make them go on together, independent of one another, the two classes of motives dividing their daily conduct. Thus men endeavour to reap the fruits of two principles of action at once; to obtain the honors of virtue while satisfying their passions; gaining security from the former, in which to enjoy the latter without restraint. For they are ashamed to con-

ness to themselves their weakness ; they are not vile nor corrupt, and desire to be honest, upright and estimable in their own eyes ; but why not aspire to something more ? Do they fear the fatigue which the labor of improving would cause, and retreat from the contemplation of sacrifices ? There are men who think that everything can be thus reconciled, who expect to obtain repose of conscience, while gratifying themselves, and who even dare to consider this compromise as a kind of wisdom. Now this is the very thing which causes confusion, and renders motives obscure and doubtful ; for, by having two springs of action at once, we really have no definite motive ; when secretly yielding to one, we may persuade ourselves that we remain faithful to another ; although yielding to personal feeling, we may think we are generous, or at least dignified, endeavouring to seduce conscience, or to disguise what we desire, that we may obtain it without remorse. Hence arises, in the serious circumstances of life, agitation and inquietude ; and when it is necessary to make great resolutions, we are embarrassed ; the discord resulting from so many different desires, not permitting us to collect our ideas and rally our strength. Hence proceeds want of all self-forgetfulness ; indecision and embarrassment in social intercourse ; want of clearness in thought ; and a manner of expressing ourselves, which is imperfect, insincere, and does not penetrate the soul. The conversation and actions of him, who does not clearly define what he means and thinks, are full of ambiguity. He continually dissimulates, and even deceives without expressly intending it, and without expecting any advantage from it ; but because he deceives himself first, and perhaps seeks in the illusions, which he makes others believe, a means of confirming what he would like to think real. He is wanting in sincerity in his conversation, because, in practice, there is no rectitude in his inclinations.

This especially happens to those who act with reference to opinion ; for they do not really intend the thing they do,

but mean to do that which complies with common prejudices, whatever it may be in itself; yet they wish to appear to act from their own reflective and independent motive; and thus falsehood is generated. The vain necessarily belie themselves. They deceive themselves and others in regard to their own actions; for they cannot recognise their ruling principle, without contradicting themselves; and they would blush to acknowledge it, and be humbled to have it made known.

There are some wicked men, who are more open and frank in their intentions than those who are half virtuous. To be effeminate and timid in virtue, compromises the character and makes it insincere. Some people have some rectitude of will in single instances, but have no plan, no general design, which takes in the whole life. Their existence comprises praiseworthy actions, labor, and zeal,—some pleasures, and repose; but it has no connexions, and answers to no destiny; for they have no vocation. Nothing they do is blameable; but neither is anything premeditated; in given cases they have very good sentiments, but they reflect little upon the possibility of acting them out in their lives. In every successive situation they go no further than that situation. We must confess, that this is the secret history of most of us: we are born, we grow up, we go, and come, and die, without doing much good or much evil; but without being able at our last hour to explain why we were placed here below; our life passes away like a drama, whose scenes are unconnected and tend to no catastrophe. Now from such habits something vague and ambiguous comes upon the character of the will; especially felt in its most important determinations. It is easy to have simplicity of intention in little things; but it is in great things that it is especially necessary; for when the intention is not defined, difficulty and obstacles are fatal.

It is natural and just to desire that virtue should be constantly rewarded upon earth. Yet if it were thus, perhaps true virtue would be still rarer than it is. There would be a new

kind of ambition, which would consist in practising excellence externally, as a means of success, and it would find ardent proselytes. Most men, without exactly making a profound and systematic calculation, would nevertheless suffer it to influence their motives; and it could not influence without affecting the principle of the most praiseworthy resolutions; good actions themselves would be founded upon mixed and complex intentions; and without being hypocrites entirely, we should still be no longer sincere with ourselves. This is nearly what now happens in the world, in consequence of the consideration which cannot be refused to merit; and as this consideration and esteem become more profitable, we shall aspire to obtain them. In the train of the crafty, who seek to ensnare public esteem with this design, follows a crowd, second rate as to morality, who, without wishing to usurp favor, put themselves in such a situation, that favor may not be refused them; and who, while acting well, could not say whether they were doing so for their own esteem, or for the opinion of others; from the desire of satisfying duty, or from the fear of being undervalued. They seek perhaps to persuade themselves, that the first of these two motives prevails, and their intentions will therefore become still more corrupted. It is better to avow openly, that we act rightly for the sake of succeeding in the world. On the other hand, even when acting rightly, we often lose the merit and pleasure of it, from not preserving those right dispositions of the heart, which alone preserve its character to excellence, and render it fruitful.

When deeply investigating our hearts, we often discover secret inclinations, of whose existence we were hardly aware, and which mingle with our resolutions and corrupt their principle. To their hiding places within us, the love of excellence has not penetrated and carried its vivifying light.

Then let this love of excellence resume the rank which naturally belongs to it; let it triumph without hesitation; let it reign unlimitedly; let it take undivided possession of the soul;

let it become our deep, sincere and exclusive passion ; and then clouds will be dispersed, doubts will be cleared away, discords will cease, everything will be simplified ; and man, understanding himself, will truly know how to act. It is the love of excellence which assigns to everything its true and fixed value ; it is this which reestablishes subordination, and consequently harmony, among motives ; this alone gives a plan and general design to life ; it connects together all events, and all circumstances, even the least actions, enabling man to go on to the end without inconstancy, and to approach it with the ease and freedom of one who walks in broad day-light through a known country. Advancing in a wide and straight path, he will meet at every step those divisions of by-ways, which cause hesitation about the directions to be pursued ; but he is guided by a law which has foreseen everything ; and he has only the care of employing the means of execution. There is nothing more constantly animated than a life which flows on under such an influence ; for an incessantly renewing interest gives value to everything ; nothing is lost ; he goes step by step, and always looks onward ; the motion is therefore ascending, and carries him every day into a freer atmosphere ; satisfaction and security increase as he advances : for our souls find content only in what puts us on good terms with ourselves ; we repose in certainty alone ; there is no peace for him, who doubts of and about himself. Then no after thought comes to agitate and disturb resolution, to paralyse energy and belie evident desires ; the whole heart is borne along unconditionally and unreservedly towards the noble object to which it has consecrated itself with absolute devotedness. Everything is consistent in our motives, decided in our ideas, frank in expression, and consequently easy, rapid, and opportune in execution. The laborer, embarrassed and perplexed in his work, does not clearly perceive the relation of the parts to the whole. What an abundance of life seems to circulate and diffuse itself in the conduct of those who have accomplished this great consecration ! How full are their days !

How finished are their actions! How well designed is the form, how clearly marked out is the destination of all their productions! How faithful is their character to itself, constant without effort, in the most varied circumstances! What ease they have in difficult things! What elasticity of soul even in the presence of sacrifices! The consideration which they did not desire, or at least, only aspired to deserve, naturally comes to meet them; for it is necessarily attached to consistent, complete, and decided characters. Besides, in the language of virtue there are certain accents of truth, certain distinctive tones which naturally escape from the upright, who alone can find them, whether they seek them or not, and precisely because they have used no art in their language.

Veracity is a part of justice; for as truth is the only true guide of activity, we ought to give it to our fellow creatures. We owe it to them also for another reason; it is a blessing, which belongs to all in common, and in which each one is particularly called to make others participate, because, by communication, so far from weakening the part which has fallen to his lot, he strengthens it in a thousand ways. But such a duty can only be understood by a man, who has begun to be sincere with himself; he who truly preserves a good intention, will, naturally, without effort or reflection, be true in social intercourse. The love of truth and the love of goodness are, besides, the same love under different forms and in different applications. Inspired therefore by love of goodness, we render public worship to truth, because we render inward homage to it; we respect it in the relations of society, not only because of the benefits which flow from it, and the rights which claim it, but because we venerate it in itself. It is easy to find subtle sophisms to persuade ourselves, that such and such truths are not useful to men; but there is not one, by the help of which we can dispute, that truth is, in itself, a sacred thing.

Frankness when observed as a duty is always constrained and uneasy, and therefore imperfect; but the love of goodness and

truth naturally disposes one to openness, because it leaves no interest in disguising anything.

Good intentions are a kind of probity towards one's self; imparting to our relations with others that sustained integrity, which, inspiring perfect security, commands from the most frivolous a respectful confidence.

Men of complicated and double intentions believe themselves sincere, when they promise; and think they are not wanting in faith, when they forget what they have promised. Do they really know what engagement they intended to form? Men, whom the love of excellence animates, have no need of pledging themselves; their character is a pledge, their intention is as valuable as a promise, and they will be faithful to it, because it is upright, enlightened and entire. Let the crafty boast of their success in a career, the plan of which they have concerted with finished art, and in which they have sported the most learned observations upon the means of conquering opinion and surprising confidence. It may be that they attain fortune and honors, and leave far behind them the modest and the peaceable, who confine themselves to the exact fulfilment of their duties. Yet when we have long and attentively observed the world, we discover, that, if not the most brilliant, at least the most certain, stable, easy, and the only desirable success attends men whose intentions are pure, upright and constant. By degrees they are discovered and made known, and they make immutable and advantageous connexions with society, guarded by a peaceful but deep founded esteem, which increases and is confirmed every day. Naturally occupying their place, it becomes so their own, that people hardly dream of taking it from them. But if the cunning man fails, and how many times he will fail! how will he be consoled and indemnified? The man of good intentions may fail without feeling regret, for his intentions still remain to him; but reverse destroys everything for the crafty, and at the same time brings to him confusion and shame. The honest man seeks his duty, and he has fulfilled it; what can he lose? He acquires perhaps one merit more.

CHAPTER VII.

HOW THE LOVE OF EXCELLENCE MAY ERR

THE more energetic a power is, the more fatal its deviations may be, when it is turned from its true end. The aberrations of a virtuous zeal have done as much injury to society, as the conspiracies of the malevolent. Rectitude of intention prevents many errors, and perhaps the greatest number; yet it cannot prevent them all, for it cannot entirely make up for the deficiency of knowledge, and has no influence over prejudices previously formed, and faithfully preserved: and in this case it may render errors more tenacious, and practically more dangerous, precisely because the testimony it renders to itself, gives it more security, and makes it more obstinate.

There are seven principal errors, which seem to concur in leading astray, in different senses, the most sincere love of excellence.

1. We may form exaggerated ideas with regard to virtue, as when we too much forget the conditions in which human nature is placed. Not that the love of virtue in itself can be excessive; for it is founded upon truth itself; and there can be no excess in the conviction which evidence gives. Excellence and the necessity of aiming for it, cannot be exaggerated, but only the possibility of entirely and rapidly attaining it. The hopes also which spring from the ardor of a zeal to which everything seems easy, may be excessive: and things praiseworthy in themselves, but not obligatory, may be transformed into absolute and imperious duties. These two exaggerations are quite analogous; for it is not doubtful, that perfection would be a duty, if it were possible; and that we should be culpable in neglecting what is simply prudent when it can be easily accomplished.

From this first error flow two fatal consequences ; one of which directly concerns him who commits it, and the other applies to the relations he bears to his fellow men. It may doubtless ensnare the pure ; but how desolate it makes them ! how many sufferings it prepares for them ! It deprives them of the just satisfaction, which, as a recompense of their efforts, ought to support them in new exertions. It saddens and makes them unjust towards themselves ; it converts the most innocent circumstances into a cause of inquietude and fear, and poisons their sweetest meditations. Souls that are affected by this moral disease, refine excessively upon the motives of their actions, and end by creating imaginary faults, through the fear of committing real ones. They are discouraged and even withered by self-reproach, and by their want of power to realize all they impose upon themselves. Some suffer themselves to be devoured by such remorse for mere negligences, as should be reserved for crime, and from which crime often succeeds in freeing itself.

It is very common to see this exaggeration affecting our judgment of others ; for it costs nothing to subject them to severe sentences. Perhaps, without owning it, we secretly yield to the inclination, which too often inclines us to undervalue merit, and to increase our severity for characters the most eminent in virtue, as if to relieve ourselves of the importunity they make us feel, or to revenge ourselves for the tacit censure which they pronounce upon us. We imitate in morals those critics of literature and the arts, who are inexorable towards masterpieces in comparing them with the ideal, and who raise the slightest rules into inviolable laws. This severity of judgment inevitably cools the benevolence to which our fellow-creatures have a right, inclining us to forsake them, and leading us in our private relations to be wanting in indulgence. We think we have only a holy indignation against evil, while we expose ourselves to the access of envy and bitter dispositions towards others. At least, we look upon all the human race with a gloo-

my and troubled eye; dishonoring and debasing it in our thoughts; becoming disgusted with social intercourse; and we justify a misanthropic disposition by the dark views we take of general corruption, and the disorders and excesses we suppose prevalent in society. It is sometimes those who are least true to virtue in their practice, who hold this disdainful language, deploring the contagion of vice, as if there were no virtue upon earth. We must confess, that moralists, also, have often exaggerated the coloring of the picture; they have only sought pretexts for condemnation, and they have not studied the redeeming traits, and often they speak of the world without knowing it. If they lived in its bosom, and observed it with calmness and impartiality, they would be more just; they would acknowledge that men are generally less wicked and perverse than they appear; that goodness of heart predominates; that it commonly prevails, when nothing comes to oppose its influence, and it can take its natural course; that this world, which is so much traduced, contains eminent virtues, although unremarked; for we are generally silent about good, but never about evil. They would especially observe, that levity, impatience, negligence and want of reflection cause a great number of those faults, whose effects are so fatal, and that we must judge in a moral point of view, not from effects but intentions. It is true we should ever keep our eyes on the sublime summits of perfection, nor cease to aspire after it with all our desires, especially if we would make daily progress. But let us take care not to lose sight of all the obstacles which separate us from that remote end, and call to mind the narrow bounds of our faculties. Let us especially apply these considerations to our fellow creatures, and gather up, with respect and joy, the scattered, imperfect, yet precious fruits, which virtue has produced upon earth. Let us not diminish the homage due to great men, by cruelly putting their deficiencies in strong relief. To do them homage will sustain ourselves; and he who considers what it must have cost them to give immortal exam-

ples, will find sufficient to admire, notwithstanding a few blemishes.

How many times the excessive severity of a false zeal has discouraged and repulsed the timid from the ways of excellence: a little indulgence would have strengthened them by keeping up their hopes of success. How many times the slothful have made this severity the pretext for refusing every attempt for improvement! How many times has its morose and peevish expressions led men to misunderstand virtue by taking from it its attractions!

2. We may deceive ourselves about the rank and subordination of the virtues, as well as about their relative importance. By granting an arbitrary preeminence or a too exclusive importance to a particular order of moral rules, we enfeeble or perhaps destroy those which should concur with, modify, restrain, and sometimes even govern others. One man, exalting himself for public duties, will think he may neglect private virtues; another, preoccupied with domestic affections, will dispense with what he owes to society. One will imagine he is an honest man, because he is faithful to all the engagements of probity, although he fail in those which govern the more delicate affections; another, jealous of maintaining the dignity of his character, will be wanting in indulgence for his fellow men. One, in his blind zeal for a good cause, may pervert the testimony of truth itself; another, absorbed with the forms of worship, will forget the claims of his fellow creatures. It may happen that praiseworthy things, but those of pure supererogation, will prevail over rigorous obligations; for the first act more upon the imagination, and have a more indefinite form. It is thus that, in doing a generous action, we sometimes forget what justice requires. Duties, in the exercise of which worldly honor is interested, predominate over those which are so unfortunate as to be obscure. How many people are capable of heroic sacrifices, who neglect purity of character! They think themselves exempt from the observance of little things, as if it were a vulgar subjection. Each

of us has his favorite virtue, and it is the seduction of this virtue, that he must fear, as his peculiar danger. What is this privileged virtue? Is it not that which harmonizes with our temperament and with the natural impulses of our character; or that, the practice of which is at once easiest and most agreeable? We are often deluded by thinking ourselves influenced by the purest views, when in reality we only yield to our habitual inclinations. One man praises goodness of heart, because he is weak; another celebrates courage, because he is impetuous. Our favorite virtue may perhaps be that, which has most relation with the habits of our profession; it may be that in which we perceive most advantage. How we admire in others those virtues, by which we profit! Thus those who have power, cannot sufficiently exalt submission, as the avaricious do not cease to extol economy to their servants.

In certain virtues, there are also required, in particular circumstances, extraordinary efforts; and thus the will must concentrate all its energy upon a single point. If such an effort should be prolonged or repeated frequently, the will would at last find itself wanting in other respects. There are some moral austerities, which thus carried to excess, become a sort of mutilation; and as we shut our eyes so as to understand better, the soul is deprived of a portion of its faculties, that it may unfold the rest more entirely, so there is an apparent heroism, which can only be purchased by such a mutilation. When those, who are heroes in the world, appear small to those with whom they are familiar, the latter are not always deceived. Let us not pretend to extraordinary things, nor aim at being heroes every day, and on every occasion. Let us not engage ourselves gratuitously in trials, which demand such high resolutions! It is enough when they come of themselves. Let us place our resolutions upon a broad basis! Let us act in such a manner that all our faculties may harmoniously concur in the great work.

3. But the most fatal of all errors, is to suppose that the end



consecrate the means. Blindly preoccupied with an end which is praiseworthy in itself, we often perceive nothing else, and everything becomes admissible for its attainment. This mistake takes a thousand forms, according to the nature of the predominating idea, which thus takes captive all the moral faculties; but whatever form it adopts, its consequences are the same; the idol may be different, but the sacrifice is alike; nature, the interests and rights of humanity, will be given up to it without pity. When this atrocious morality is once instituted, all the passions flock in crowds to take refuge under its unexpected protection; ambition, envy and hatred are indulged under this safeguard; usurping the honors, which belong to zeal for excellence, they become a thousand times more fatal in consequence of this sacrilege. Left to themselves, and obliged to appear in their own form, they would at least be opposed and condemned; internal reprobation and a just shame would moderate their influence, or prepare their remedy. But the kind of excess which is subservient to our cause is justified and gloried in; we are confirmed in it by the authority of the sacred duty to which we pretend to devote ourselves unreservedly; and thus do evil conscientiously. We may then be cruel, while uttering virtuous words, and even while thinking we have the purest intentions, we glory in our inflexibility. Such a fanaticism is much more inexorable than avarice, ambition, or fury; the latter can leave some access open to pity, and might yield to a more powerful interest; in a word, the victim might obtain favor. But what favor can be expected from him, who regards it a duty to sacrifice compassion itself, and to harden his heart;—from him who knows nothing superior, and nothing equal to the considerations he obeys, and who sees in them an imperious and absolute law? This kind of fanaticism will not always be ardent, and impetuous, as we should be tempted to believe; it will often wear an appearance of calmness and equanimity; a desperate appearance, because it denotes its immutability. It is enough if the exclusive idea be-

come fixed and habitual. He who is given up to such an error, remains sincere and perhaps gentle in the midst of violence. He smiles almost while he strikes. What an error, great God! is that, which, rendering virtue an accomplice of crime, makes it odious upon earth.

4. Sometimes, on the contrary, we may take the means for the end: this mistake is much more common. Concentrating all our respect upon the instrument, we forget its destination, and continue to cling to it with the same force, when it no longer serves the same purpose. We suppose it has an absolute value, when it has only a relative merit. There are some very useful practices in certain places, at certain times, in certain circumstances, which lose their utility and may even be disadvantageous in a different state of things. Some practices are useful to certain persons, and indifferent and hurtful to others, like the remedies and dietetic prescriptions which the art of medicine recommends. This error resembles the very common prejudice, which aims at making a universal panacea of certain preparations, and a regimen for all temperaments and all ages. This is the error of men of low and limited minds, who, not penetrating into the meaning of the moral law, perceive only the preparatory means of execution.

5. We may also take the sign for the thing signified, and give the former all the importance which we ought to grant to the latter. Morality has not only direct expressions, but also infinitely various symbols, which borrow its dignity and recall its sacred image. There happens what so often happens in religion; worship insensibly degenerates into idolatry: the mistake is easy and often innocent. When the sign is separated from the thing, the thing is forgotten, and the sign alone remains; but the idea of duty still adheres to it. We arbitrarily transfer, through association, the notion of excellence, to things which are only connected with it accidentally; and create artificial duties, to which we attach absolute importance, and which we impose upon others. It is not unexampled to put

these factitious duties in the first rank, as if they received a peculiar recommendation from our instituting them ourselves. Sometimes these factitious duties are derived from a tacit and reciprocal convention of society, presiding over manners, and composing as many codes as there can be states of society. This morality of pure human creation is in extreme danger of being exposed to the influence of all the errors, which man falls into in his works. It may sanction and prescribe things, which are culpable in themselves. And when it exalts into virtue things simply useless, it still is productive of serious disadvantage; for this factitious morality is, in practice, often met with in combination with zeal; and as it cannot harmonize with it, there will be a sad struggle between them, in which real morality will not always triumph. Moreover, as we are only gifted with a measure of strength, by which to obtain excellence, and as the measure is very small, we should not run the risk of half exhausting it to satisfy arbitrary laws; like those imprudent men, who, enjoying a moderate fortune, spend their all in trifles, and find themselves afterwards deprived of necessaries. Conscience, however, is secured, for it rests upon the merit we think we have acquired in accomplishing the task which we have gratuitously imposed upon ourselves: when we have been faithful to certain external practices, we think little of cultivating virtues, and are at rest about duties because we have observed decorum.

6. We are easily induced to convert into an absolute and universal rule, the suggestion which was only intended to apply to certain cases, and which should be followed only under certain essential conditions, and within certain determinate limits. This arises from the natural propensity, which inclines the human mind to generalize unreservedly, and assimilate without precaution; and this danger increases when the rule is presented in an abstract and concise form, which singularly strengthens this error of the reason. We might make a very extraordinary collection of abstract maxims, which, though praiseworthy

in themselves, in so far as they are conceived under certain restrictions, have nevertheless served to ravage the world, when they were thrown into society, and given up to the passions : there is no crime, which has not found in some one of them a pretext, or a means of apology. Those simple formulas, which, speculatively considered, are not dangerous, and which beam with all the brightness which the moral idea they express possesses, have a magic power to excite and transmit enthusiasm with astonishing rapidity. Like lightning, which furrows the cloud, they dazzle us ; and, thinking we comprehend beforehand every application, we make mistakes. Many people have certain axioms of this kind, which they have composed for themselves ; it might be said, that they employ them as a kind of moral talisman, which is to be sufficient for them in everything, and at the power of which everything ought to yield, even evidence itself.

7. When we are animated by the love of excellence, we are not satisfied to pursue it ourselves ; we wish excellence to be extended in its influence, and its worship acknowledged. We feel an ardent and noble desire, that other men should share a treasure of infinite value ; for we cherish excellence as the common inheritance of the human race. But with this generosity, we may make mistakes ; in our impatience we may mistake the extent of our rights ; instead of limiting ourselves to the use of means, which are peculiar to the cause of excellence, that is to say, to the knowledge which enlightens, and the sentiment which persuades, we may be led to employ those which also serve the cause of the passions ; we may become impotent, perhaps oppressive, perhaps persecuting ; we may torment others, as if we had some other office than that of exhibiting virtue to make it loved ; as if we were invested with authority to obtain submission to its decrees. When controversies are entered into, in regard to the application of moral truths, this kind of error may become still more fatal ; for we shall spend upon controversial points all the earnestness which should be-

long to first principles; and may not remember, that they can be separated from one another: thus a passage will be opened for the subtle passions of vanity and pride, which will mingle unawares with zeal itself to corrupt it. Hence springs the animosity of quarrels, prejudice and injustice; a wall of separation is too often raised between men, who were made to esteem one another, while the enemies of virtue rejoice at the desperate contest.*

The love of excellence may also err in application, in the same manner as every doctrine, how wise and certain soever it may be in itself, is subject to error, when it comes into practice; that is, because we mistake the particular points, which serve as a basis for the application. This is a kind of error, which may occur in every state of circumstances, and against which there is no general precaution to be used, unless it be to take care to observe narrowly, and examine scrupulously, what we think we have observed, and to mistrust ourselves.

Does love of excellence deceive us in all this? No. It is we who deceive ourselves by perverting, confounding, or transposing the notions and rules which flow from it. The feeling is still pure and lawful, although the judgment may err, and the feeling, turned in a wrong direction, may be directed against the end that it has proposed to itself. But it might be said, that when the love of excellence errs, it is because it is as yet imperfect; for it errs for want of knowing its end clearly, and for want of completely entering into the spirit of the holy inspirations which should guide it. When the love of ex-

* Sometimes we confound, or affect to confound tolerance with indifference in matters of opinion or belief. But these notions are essentially distinct. Indifference consists in looking upon opinions as equally doubtful, at least as equally good or innocent in themselves. Tolerance consists in abstaining from condemning, as guilty of evil intention, those who profess opinions, which we consider false or pernicious. Therefore we can have the most ardent zeal for truth, and the most entire tolerance for persons. We can detest error, and cherish him who deceives himself: then we shall have more means of undeceiving him.

cellence is profound, true, entire, and perfectly sincere, it becomes a light, or at least it favors and invokes light. In morality we are rarely innocent of our errors.

SECTION II.

FRUITS OF SELF-GOVERNMENT.

CHAP. I.

POWER OVER INCLINATION.

THERE is a kind of self-government, which the world praises because it is accommodated by it. Thus in social intercourse, we acquire the habit of regulating our manners; avoiding to show in our external actions the vivacity of our first emotions, or to give ourselves up to effeminate and low habits. But by thus regulating our bearing and language, we only govern our organs, and the secret passions often acquire more energy from being shut up in the depth of the heart. This self-government, also, may be only the strength of vanity and falsehood, not the energy of virtue. The deceitful excel in the art of repressing external expressions of passion, that they may in reality indulge them more freely. The true power of self-government is that which man exercises over his own will. It is the principle of the strong-minded, and although it is only the instrument of virtue, it is eminently moral. For man is a moral being only when he is a cause, his morality lying in his mode of action, as a cause.

The scientific arts, by which the external activity of man is exercised, are so many levers of the power by which he governs and rules material nature, and subjects it to his wants and

desires. The art of wisdom according to which he exercises his internal activity, is the lever of the power which governs and rules his inclinations, subjecting them to the interests of his happiness, that is, to the laws of excellence : it is the greatest of all arts.

In order to conceive the power by which man governs his inclinations, we will in the first place consider his sensations and simplest imaginings ; for the laws of those modifications of his mind are most easily understood.

1. It is not in our power to create any sensation of which our organs are not susceptible, and also there are a great number of sensations, from which we cannot escape ; but on the other hand, there are a great many which we can excite or suppress at pleasure ; as by opening or shutting our eyes. We cannot conceive of a simple sensation that we have not felt, or which we have forgotten ; while on the other hand, sometimes we are unable to banish an image which besets us ; or to break up an association of ideas, which is strongly cemented by habit. Yet it generally depends upon ourselves, whether the image grow fainter and disappear ; and whether or not we avoid occasions of recalling it, or seek to reproduce the signs which may receive it : it is also in our power to group images in a thousand new and different ways. Our power over images is much greater than that over sensations, because the instruments which the mind uses to create the first, are much more numerous, and the combinations they can form are infinite.

2. When sensations or images are present with us, and cannot be avoided, their relative and even absolute intensity is increased or enfeebled by the desire we have, not to observe them. The impressions they make are therefore modified. This influence is more extensively exercised over those images which are more particularly the consequence of our own activity ; and this explains to us, how the direct and multiplied efforts we make to struggle against certain inclinations, sometimes contribute to render their action upon us more powerful and

importunate, rendering our triumph more difficult. It is that we redouble our attention to the image, while wishing to banish it.

3. Finally, although sensations and images may be present with us, and their intensity be very great, independently of the circumstance of our attention or inattention, we can prevent them from invading that part of our nature, where the springs of will are in play. This part of our nature is the region of cool deliberation. It is where our intellectual and moral self dwells; and it is where we retire, when we take the cup which contains a bitter potion, or when we leave our limbs in the hands of the surgeon. •

Hence we perceive, that the soul directly unfolds three powers over purely sensual inclinations: a physical power of putting ourselves in the way of them or not; a mental power of attending or not attending to them; and a moral power of absolute rejection. For the attraction which draws us towards agreeable sensations, and the repugnance which repels those that are painful, are so inseparable from received impressions, that we cannot free ourselves from either. The soul also unfolds analogous powers over the affections, a still more energetic part of our nature.

Self-government, then, consists of three principal branches; the art of foresight and economy in regard to the aversions which excite or repel our inclinations; a positive influence over the intensity of those inclinations; and finally an open struggle to master them.

The first might be compared to the administrative department in political government; the second to the offices which the magistrate exercises; and the third to the employment of public force by a well constituted community.

1. The affections are strengthened either by the actual presence of objects, by the remembrances which preserve their images, or by the manner in which these objects are considered: for it is often sufficient to change the views we take of ob-

jects, to change entirely the sentiments they call forth: the same man, for example, is offered under two different aspects to his friends and enemies, and it often happens that both are equally true, although each is incomplete. This observation leads to prudence and precaution; by the help of which we may go back to the origin of the impressions we receive, and excite, preserve, or slacken the movements of an affection: and, as different affections, according to their relations to each other, or according to their different tendencies, may reciprocally aid, or may balance one another, a prudent wisdom uses the means employed to govern each of them to react indirectly upon the others. This wisdom will also prevent exaggeration, taking care that objects do not prepossess us in too exclusive a manner; sustaining the affections, when they are inclined to fail, by concentrating attention, and preventing or dissipating the false prejudices which arise from the arbitrary transformations, by which the imagination perverts objects. It will also restore things to their simple reality, and rectify the imperfect judgments which have been passed upon them, by exhibiting them in every point of view. It will especially strive to stop, in their beginning, all the false associations of ideas, which might countenance bad passions, and it will strengthen those associations which are reasonable, and conducive to praiseworthy sentiments. This is rather a principle of conduct, or an exercise of foresight, than the practice of virtue; but if it be not virtue itself, it is a kind of common wisdom, employed in the service of virtue, and is awake to all circumstances, whether unexpected or not, like a tutelary guardian, measuring their influence, seeking the means to modify it, and thus avoiding the dangers of which the moral sentiment gives the sign; or at least preparing the aid which the moral sentiment recommends.

2. If simple individual sensation implies a concurrence of the activity of the soul with something outward, the impressions which belong to the affections suppose a much more active cooperation of the soul: hence arises a very highly important

phenomenon, although it is not always clearly observed ; it is this : that our attention to what affects us, gives new impetuosity to feeling ; while by refusing our consent we gradually lessen its energy. We very plainly observe this in anger, for instance ; we must feel anger to a certain degree ; but when at this point, we can remain simple spectators of our own agitation as if it were another's, without cooperating in it at all by our consent ; and then we shall see it insensibly grow calm. At other times, on the contrary, a passion does not result from exaggerated strength, but from weakness and moral prostration. Then by calling back the energy of the soul, and applying it to sentiments capable of balancing the received impression, we shall succeed in preventing its influence. This is what we observe in ourselves, when in the presence of danger.* Thus the instinctive affections, although in their origin independent of the will, through its concurrence obtain gradually a new degree of vehemence, or, if not seconded, grow cool. We may even succeed in creating a series of artificial affections ; but they possess little force or duration, if they be not engrafted upon the first. By artificial affections we do not mean the reflective affections, which belong to moral sentiments. Artificial affections have no root in our nature, and are only the production of an excited and heated imagination. Reflective affections, on the contrary, have their source in the inmost soul ; we do not create them, we only favor their birth and progress by a peaceful and constant meditation. We give forms and arbitrary coloring to the objects of the first ; in the objects of the second we discover inherent properties, which are shrouded with a veil, that levity and inattention do not penetrate.

Purely instinctive inclinations have one thing in common with these artificial affections, produced by the play of the imagina-

* All strictly psychological details are avoided in this work ; in which moral philosophy is made to rest upon experience : therefore phenomena so strictly united as those of the will and the intellect are not analysed. So agriculture is abstracted from natural science.

tion ; both are favored by the effect of surprise, and are irritated by the opposition arising from material obstacles. Generally, also, they are most violent in their commencement, decreasing in the lapse of time, and ending in satiety. It is quite different with the sentiments that result from reflection, which the love of excellence cherishes ; feeble in their origin, they become strong in proportion as they are prolonged : they are also more vivid as they are better enjoyed, receiving their energy from themselves, and not from the contrast of circumstances. They are fully under the power of internal activity ; from this alone they spring, and by this they triumph. Thus in the struggle of the soul against the inclinations to which it is subjected by its passive condition, it still has this advantage, that it can oppose sentiments to them, which are at its own disposal, and the principle of which is found in itself, and it may raise these sentiments to the highest degree of vigor ; so that while the former decline, the latter will be constantly strengthened.

We have said that instinctive passions are irritated by obstacles, which proceed from material objects, or by causes simply contrary. They are calmed, on the contrary, by those which the moral law, clearly manifested, opposes to them ; and although they may not be reduced to silence, their language becomes more timid and modest. There is a peculiar power in moral law over the tempests of the heart, subduing the disorderly tumult of the senses. It might be said that the spirit of order and peace, of which it is the messenger, insinuates itself into the agitated and troubled soul, and puts all its elements in their proper place. So the approach of popular fury seems delayed by the mere opposition of a grave and venerable man, even before he has spoken conciliatory words. A painful wound, which, when it is occasioned by a simple accident, or by the hand of an enemy, excites a decided emotion of irritation, seems tempered, when the pain is imposed by duty. Simple necessity (that physical necessity, which seems to be a decree of fate) often humbles us, because it leaves no hope of

any useful resistance ; it often irritates us, also, in proportion as there is no hope. Sometimes, even when we submit to it, the submission is bitter and sullen, like that we yield to tyranny ; but moral law subdues without humbling, because it raises our soul instead of discouraging it, and the submission it obtains is delightful to ourselves, because it is voluntary. True self-government moderates our most innate inclinations ; for, as we have remarked, this government is not force merely, nor is it arbitrary ; it is stamped with real authority, the authority of reason and virtue, of which in commanding ourselves, we become the ministers. He who seeks to govern himself from the mere motive of satisfying his pride, or some other material interest, will succeed when this motive is stronger than his inclinations ; but he will not possess the secret of that active and hidden power which penetrates into the source of the inclination itself, and modifies the original impulse. He is like a capricious despot loading a slave with chains ; and not like the magistrate who is respected by those he governs. He does not command ; he does violence to himself ; he produces a shock, but does not exercise a power.

We complain perpetually of the tyranny of the passions ; we need only complain of ourselves, for, by neglecting the power which belongs to us, we become accomplices of their violence, and thus make heavier the yoke, under which we pretend to groan, and which we might have lightened.

3. Prudence and care rarely succeed in preventing or turning aside more than one wrong inclination ; but there is no heart, how pure and honest soever it may be, which is not beset at certain moments with extreme importunity, or surprised unexpectedly by a more or less violent attack. Then art is not sufficient ; we must have courage, vigor, boldness, and constancy. Here we must display the third power. This is the time for open combat and victory. Then whatever the assault upon our will may be, it will not shake the ramparts ; the enemy cannot penetrate into the sanctuary where it dwells, unless

it consents to give him access. We are free so long as we do not capitulate ; consequently we are all powerful ; for the determination, which follows, springs from ourselves alone, and our actions will submit to its voice and no other. Inclinations only solicit us, and we are innocent of them so long as we do not favor them ; when they redouble their entreaties, our merit may be increased ; when they seem to threaten us most, and to bring us to shame and servitude, we may learn all the extent of our power, and all the grandeur of our nature. The struggle would doubtless be unequal, if the will presented itself alone, unarmed and resisting, for the vain pleasure of showing its independence ; or, if its allies were other inclinations of the same nature, inconstant or weak ; but it receives the aid of a superior and moral power. We oppose the love of excellence to solicitation, and duty to desire. It is when we are clothed with this virtuous dignity, that resistance takes its most imposing character. This trial will doubtless be difficult, and long ; but what is the recompense ? It is one which explains all the destiny of man ; for it comprises the secret of his morality and happiness.

The exercise of each of these three branches of self-government depends in part upon circumstances, and partly upon the character and individual dispositions, which may render either of them more necessary or easy. But it is useful to combine them as much as possible. When united, they form a complete system of internal government : and our nature is so weak, the enemies of our happiness are so numerous and terrible, that we are not allowed to neglect any aid. The grand art of securing our triumph in those extraordinary circumstances which require all our courage, depends, in the greatest measure, upon the care we take to enter the field of battle, properly prepared, and in possession of all our arms.

Self-government, after all, however, is only a means of execution, which must be subject to the love of excellence, to which it is destined to minister. So in political governments,

public power, under its three principal forms, is still but an organ of the laws, employed to secure their triumph. And we should constantly consider this great moral power, in this its most essential relation.

CHAPTER II.

LIMITS AND MODERATION.

MAN is a finite being, who tends towards infinity. He is in a narrow sphere, and continually aspires to enlarge it. In this tendency there is something just and laudable, but it may go astray. All that is right in it, should be resolved into means of perfection; and all that is wrong, repressed by moderation. It is for the love of excellence to remove these limitations, which are obstacles; and, for self-government to preserve those which are a protection. By the former, we satisfy the essential desires of our nature, and answer to the future; and by the latter, we conform to the present conditions of our being.

The limitations which we are called to remove, are those, which our ignorance, effeminacy and vicious inclinations have placed around us; but we are called upon to respect those which the general laws of nature or of society have established. The first are oftener those which we dare not pass; and the second we try to break away. We stop before obstacles of our own raising; and attempt to do violence to destiny instead of trusting in the guardian boundaries, which nature has placed around our fragile existence.

All order in the universe, in society, in the intellectual, and in the moral world, results from proper limitations justly respected. The mechanical lever acts only as long as it meets with resistance in the fulcrum. No material force is kept up

any longer than there is a moderator ; and it becomes more energetic in proportion as it is better restrained.* Even the harmony of celestial movements is owing to the reciprocal attraction, which, presenting an opposing obstacle to their course, retains each body in its orbit. So in society the power of industry arises from respect to property ; individual wealth from economy : social as well as physical order being consequent upon the balance of action and resistance. Political power is founded upon respect for laws, and preserved by the very obstacles, which the securities, given to individual and collective rights, oppose to private ambition and to the wrong use of power. So the rays of the sun, striking upon objects, reveal them by being reflected from their surfaces, and we only know matter by its resistance. Perceptions become distinct, and consequently objects of compassion, by the boundaries which separate them from one another ; forms are determined by the lines which terminate them ; and quantities by the degrees to which they are limited ; relations are estimated only so far as they can be measured, and measure is the application of reciprocal limits. Now there is harmony only so far as relations are exactly estimated. In a word, everything is vague, uncertain and confused, until limitations have been placed and acknowledged.

It is also necessary that the will of man fix some starting point, and that it stop seasonably, to grasp the end. Privation guards pleasure, and abstinence protects virtue. Every rampart is a boundary as well as a defence. The soul is strengthened by the habit of respect, and the action of free and intelligent beings agrees with the general harmony, in consequence of the limitation it observes. The limitations, which we come in contact with, teach us how to fix them for ourselves. Moderation is in itself a power, peaceable, regular, constant and invincible, a power designed to restrain the energy and activity of the soul within the confines which answer, on one side, to the

* The celebrated Joseph Montgolfier was accustomed to trace back the principle of all grand discoveries in mechanism to the art of *imprisoning forces*.

reach of our faculties, and on the other, to the objects which are assigned them; a power which checks, that we may be capable of acting better, and which represses aberrations, that we may more successfully go on in the right direction. We here meet with one of those dispensations of Providence, which we cannot sufficiently admire: this moderation, which is the secret of virtue, is also the secret of happiness. Sobriety is the first condition even of sensual pleasures. 'Use without abusing,' is a rule which comprises all the counsels of prudence. In the external world there is only a given provision of materials for pleasure; in the internal world, only a certain capacity to receive it. But our desires and fears embrace an indefinite sphere, because they mount on the wings of imagination, which creates for itself new regions beyond the compass of realities, and renders present enjoyment more keen and exquisite, when the spur of desire is still felt; and if the shadow of fear appears, we become more strongly attached to what we possess. Reality must be mingled with expectation, and the present live upon the future. Voluntary temperance, then, unites with sensual enjoyments a delicate sentiment, which, arising from the consciousness of our own liberty, heightens its value. We relish pleasure in proportion as we govern it, instead of being governed by it. Hence arise those joys, so innocent, pure, varied and inexhaustible, which are the privilege of those in mediocrity. Privation continually enhances their enjoyment, because it prevents satiety; every object is of more worth, because of use; all being fruitful, and nothing burthensome. How remarkable, that the limitations of property should render the enjoyment of it almost infinite!* The opulent please and refresh themselves, by seeking in poetry, the representa-

* The extraordinary man, who, at the commencement of this age, was for a time the most powerful upon earth, said one day to the author of this work, that he could not conceive of the enjoyment of property, and he explained it by saying that he possessed everything. It is necessary to say, however, that he added, *he enjoyed* having everything to give.

tion of a happiness, which flies them and takes refuge in the cottage. For obscurity has charms; relieving the burning anxieties of self-love, and giving a kind of independence. In obscurity, as well as in mediocrity, there is repose and secret satisfaction; for, freeing us from vain desires, harmony between our situation and the narrow proportions of our terrestrial existence is restored.

Inclinations are not bad of themselves. They become vicious only by the aberrations and excesses, which lead them from their legitimate objects, or destroy the proportion which should subsist between them. It is thus that morality should be understood to repress natural inclinations. The power of man over his inclinations is given him to regulate, not to destroy them. They are useful, and it is by morality that they may be preserved so; for it is morality which prescribes to them their just limits; but the government of them becomes more difficult in this view, for these limits are not easy to estimate or to preserve. We sometimes succeed better in stifling, than in checking the impetuosity of emotion; and we can remain inactive more easily, than we can restrain ourselves when acting.

Struck with this consideration, that the inclinations lead us astray, and become corrupted, by not attaining, or by going beyond, their proper objects, Confucius and Aristotle have made virtue consist in a just medium. If we were to take this definition in its literal sense, the two philosophers would seem to take the effect for the cause. But they, perhaps, meant to designate the cause by the effect, and then their definition should be rendered in other terms; making virtue consist in self-government, of which moderation is the fruit, and consequently the characteristic sign.

Passionate men seek to delude themselves; and they glory in their aberrations; imputing them to a supposed power, as if there were any reflection in the emotion, which leads them astray. But what is this but a power passing into us without

arising from, or belonging to ourselves? What is its merit? In the opinion of passionate men, moderation is cowardice, indecision and indolence. Such is the constant language of political parties: according to them, one has no opinion of his own, unless he runs into extremes. Partisans have not sarcasms enough to heap upon the wise and just citizens, who are strangers to any other sentiment than that of the love of the public good; they are indignant towards that calm reason, which, by its silence and its attitude alone, pronounces censure upon them. And whenever political moderation is imputed to crime, or ridiculed, we may be sure that the state is the subject of faction, or the prey of party spirit. Passions are contagious: to be led astray, it is enough to yield to a received impulse; that is, it is enough to obey; but in order to resist, we must keep free, and consequently be our own masters.

A gross mistake can alone confound the insensibility of selfishness with the moderation of virtue; selfishness resists, indeed, but resists generous emotions only; moderation resists the exaltations of personal feeling; selfishness is inactive; moderation produces calmness; selfishness bears no fruit; moderation prevents the excesses which would destroy us.

Agitation and violence may proceed from extreme sensibility; but they are always a sign of moral weakness. Weak characters, given up without defence to events and to other men, are moved, but do not move themselves; they have impetuosity but no aim; and thus become the sport of continual change. Everything goes by chance, and consequently all is confusion and disorder within them. Their impulses are contradictory in their succession, because they have no regulator. Their rashness is blind, and their discouragement is absolute, because they trust in an artificial power, and think they possess what they only borrow; and they are left without resources when it abandons them.

In consequence of an analogous mistake, we sometimes take indecision for impartiality, because hesitation and doubt pre-

vent us from choosing between two contrary determinations. But true impartiality, which is the result of moderation, does not consist in not dividing, but in regulating our determinations by the real merit of things; not in immobility, but in choice; not in negativeness, but in just proportion. It is firm, because convinced. There is no more solid union than that which is founded upon harmony of relations, and the exact agreement of reciprocal conditions. Impartiality does not judge between error and truth, and good and evil; but between the contrary exaggerations which corrupt truth and excellence by a mixture of evil and error.


Indecision of mind may doubtless sometimes arise from conscious and self-confessed ignorance; but there is on the other hand, nothing more positive than presumptuous ignorance. The indecision which is most difficult to cure, and is really a mental disease, proceeds from narrowness of intellectual vision, united to a certain subtlety in the manner of perceiving; there being just enough penetration to see by turns all sides of a subject, without enough power to embrace and sum up the whole at once. When an undecided mind ceases to doubt, it becomes positive; thus skepticism, is resolved into a blind credulity, and credulity into skepticism; and we see these two dispositions sometimes unite and qualify each other.

Indecision of will arises from indifference; it is the consequence of a lethargic weakness, which takes all power from motives. In certain cases, it is also the sad consequence of a blind self-love; for sometimes the law of morality and the love of virtue could alone turn the balance between contrary inclinations; between the advantages we hope from a courageous resolution, and the sacrifices it demands. Yet the elevated, sometimes, in their turn, show an indecision about little things, which astonishes the vulgar, and makes them smile. It is because the latter do not understand the indifference of the former, to interests which are so important to the frivolous. Weak minds, on the contrary, hesitate about weighty and serious things; because they are too heavy for them to lift.

Exaggeration in ideas is a consequence of precipitation of mind ; it is for reflection to circumscribe. Now, precipitation, like impatience, is a sign of weakness.

Exaggeration in sentiments is the consequence of a bewilderment which masters us ; we can only examine what we govern. We often designedly exaggerate our ideas, because we feel the feebleness of our conviction ; and of our sentiments, because we feel the weakness of our will.

However painful self-restraint may be, our self-love often receives more willingly the limits we put upon ourselves, than those which are given us. The first are our choice and our work. Thus we take a secret pride in temperance. We resemble those princes who like to descend incognito into private life, but would not consent to be kept there against their will. The lot, which has been assigned us in society, is an enclosure which limits our rights, our property, our pleasures, our pretensions, our most simple movements, perpetually, and on all sides ; curbing the insatiable desire for spontaneous activity which is natural to us. This enclosure seems to become narrower for each individual in proportion as the development of civilisation, multiplying his duties with his relations, increases the enormous disproportion between what he perceives and what he can attain. It also seems to become narrower for those who compose the largest class of society. We say, 'it seems narrower,' because, although the barriers are not nearer, their presence is more keenly felt ; and on all sides a thousand prospects are opened to ambition of every kind. Moreover, the sight of so many blessings and honors lavished upon others, which are not the reward of merit, not only awakens all the incentives to cupidity and envy ; but more noble sentiments also arise to lead astray and torment the heart. We possess within ourselves the fire of an energy which requires what we are destined for ; we feel within us faculties which demand a larger theatre of action ; so we envy wealth, if not its treasures,



at least the elegance which surrounds it, and the independence it procures; we envy power, if not its proud pleasures, at least its power of diffusing a beneficent influence over the human race; we hail the image of glory in our dreams, and think we are worthy of the highest destinies. In proportion as we mingle with the world, seductions of this kind become more powerful. If, from the effect of some transient circumstances, the ranks of society are for a moment confounded, if rapid and unexpected ways are open to fortune and to honors, the temptation is strengthened by the examples we have before us, and by the possibility of success. How then can we be preserved from inquietude and bitterness, and peaceably restrain ourselves within the humble sphere, to which we are perhaps condemned?—or be content to make only those slow and progressive efforts to get beyond it, which are generally the only lawful ones? For, although the desire of raising and expanding ourselves is the motive of all industry, it must renounce the violence which conquers while spoiling, and subject itself to those regular labors, which alone are truly fruitful, though they become so insensibly. But it is not enough to be resigned to our condition; we must also be content with it, whatever it may be; not only for the sake of happiness, but for usefulness and for virtue. We effect nothing with success, if we are ill at ease; we do nothing well, if we are wearied by restraint; there is a habit of inward joy, which is necessary to facilitate the practice of excellence. The principle of all harmony disappears, as soon as we feel ourselves out of place. This is one of the great diseases of the human heart, particularly at certain times and in certain countries. Nothing is more difficult, perhaps, than to lay hold of that exact and just medium between the apathy which renders us incapable of improving our condition while following the general interest, and the disorderly impatience, which agitates and destroys, while wishing to take possession of, and produce.

Neither is it enough to know how to be content with the

social situation which falls to our lot; there is a more painful cause for resignation, because there are mental limits which touch us still nearer; and it is to be remarked, that this trouble especially affects gifted men, for they have a more vivid and enlightened perception of these limits. Consumed by a thirst for truth, their reason everywhere meets with barriers which check investigation; and they feel their own impotence. But perhaps nature would refuse them the power of making truth prevail; and perhaps circumstances would prevent them from making it welcome to others. The noble passion of virtue burns in their souls; but sometimes their will is rebellious, and resists, or fails at the seasonable moment: they conceive of excellence, yet are hurried away to what they condemn. They have more to bear than outward difficulties; for they often have to bear with themselves. The more elevated they are in the propitious hours of sublime contemplation, the more they feel the weight of their insufficiency at the moment of action, and are surprised to find that they fall below themselves. Should there be a moderation, then, which would suppress the love of truth, and zeal for excellence? No; but there is a true virtue, which teaches us not to be discouraged, and not to presume upon ourselves; there is a moderation in pretensions and in hopes, which is resigned to the imperfections of our nature; and this is the more difficult in proportion as the ideal end to which we aspire, without being able to attain it, is more elevated and laudable.

A desire for excitement explains the greater part of human actions much better than the reasonings of interest. This not only deceives interest, but it easily triumphs over it, even when the latter is armed with all its logic. Now excitement and its charms cannot be measured by a compass, or estimated by geometrical calculations; they cannot even be always foreseen, because they depend upon a thousand circumstances, and upon the secrets of individual dispositions. How bold then are the systems of legislation and morality, which suppose man always led

by calculations of interest! It is an error, of which theories upon public economy have often shown the effects. The love of novelty, the blind passion for lottery and gambling, and even the attractions of such dangers as a military life offers, spring from this very desire of excitement, seeking to gratify itself in a thousand ways. Hence the charms of violent passion. Agitation is also a fruitful source of excitement, and as disorder causes agitation, it is a continual cause of surprise, in that it deranges the accustomed course of things. As destruction is sometimes a grand and improving spectacle, the desire of excitement becomes, as a natural consequence, the too frequent cause of the misfortunes of states and individuals, making lamentable corruptions in public and private morality. We seldom do evil for the sake of doing it, but often to enjoy the sight of the agitation it produces; and this helps us to account for the indefinable inclination which certain beings have for cruelty. Here may also be found an explanation of the not less inconceivable phenomenon, which depravity sometimes presents, when it unites cruelty with voluptuousness.

This is the chief career for self-government; and it is difficult and immense. We must strengthen the soul by tempering its emotions; restore it to health by calming that burning fever which thirsts for excitement; and, teaching the will to stop seasonably, we must unfold its energies at the time of need. We must also moderate impetuosity by exciting gentle affections, and arouse dejection by awakening noble sentiments; and keep all the powers of the heart attentive and docile to the signal they may receive from reason. But how and by what right will this internal power lay upon them such restraint? We have said; itself an organ of the legislator, it has borrowed its authority, and proclaims the decrees of the moral law itself. Prudence might advise moderation; but it could not always give the courage necessary to its own counsels. There is no constantly uniform moderation, except that which is founded upon duty.

CHAPTER III.

STRENGTH OF CHARACTER.

STRENGTH of character is an habitual power over the will, by which we triumph over obstacles, and nourish inflexible determinations that nothing external can shake. It is always implied in moderation, especially if we are moderate when impelled to extremes. It is the supreme act of moral liberty, and must not be confounded with dispositions and qualities that borrow some of its effects, without having its character. It is a strictly moral power, and constitutes the distinction of man.

There is a sort of natural moderation, a phlegmatism of nature, the gift of temperament and humor, which protects some men against emotions. There are fewer sufferings, fewer causes of fear, fewer wounds for men thus constituted. Existence being more material, they are less accessible to pain. But this is a sort of paralysis; it is independent of will; it draws from trial no fruit or merit; it is sleep, not the courage of virtue.

There is also a rigidity of character which admits no foreign elements, repelling grief, and danger; this is disdainful pride, obstinacy, inflexible habit. Motives are nothing to this kind of character, for there is no acting from reflection: it may be considered a rampart against trial, rather than a means of rendering trial profitable.

There is, thirdly, an indifference of heart, through which some men are always quiet, because they are not capable of being interested. They have neither feeling nor foresight; they are calm, because vacant, and have neither combats nor triumphs. But this is apathy, and not strength of character. On the oth-

er hand, there is sometimes a warmth of temperament, which is kindled by the presence of dangers, irritated by obstacles, taking pleasure in excitement, and instinctively generous, especially fond of great and brilliant efforts. But this is a gift of organization, not the result of will; mere animals are not without it. It is apt to fail in time of need. Trial loses its character and becomes enjoyment to this kind of temperament. There is also an exaltation of mind, which subjects realities to illusions. To this state of mind, everything seems easy; the present disappearing before the world which the imagination has created. It distances trial and veils it from sight. The veil, however, must be withdrawn at last, and the spectacle will be the more terrible to the beholder, who is not prepared for it. Besides, this state of mind is changeable in its nature, and it is followed by a dejection which deprives us of our natural resources. It is not real strength. The excess of the passions, also, seems to escape pain and fear. We know that the most acute sufferings are suspended by a lively and sudden emotion. The passions therefore produce a sort of heroism, but it is limited by the exciting object. This is another way of avoiding trial without competing with it. But the impulse by which the soul is carried along, is external to itself, and cannot be governed by it. The soul is feeble, when the passions have thus carried away all its energy. It does not always avoid the adversary; for it wants discernment in the choice of means, and creates new trials in the future, casting itself from one rock to another. This is moral fever, not health; violence, not strength of character.

Strength of character is nothing exaggerated, affected, artificial, tumultuous, or unequal; it does not live upon error, or belie nature, or stifle lawful affections. Its seat is not in the imagination, nor in the organs, nor in anything external to the moral nature. It consists entirely in self-government, the principle of which is found in the sanctuary of conscience. It does not escape grief, but feels and accepts it. It does not turn

from danger, but confronts and measures it. Hence the virtue which consists in moral obligation is called strength; for this fidelity is most fully displayed in the triumph gained over such enemies, and reaps in this victory its most precious reward. Besides, of all the moral qualities, strength of character is the most indispensable: it is the first of which man feels the want; for pain and fear await him on the threshold of life: it is also the first which is developed in the character of nations. In the very infancy of civilisation, savages have given prodigious examples of firmness in suffering; and the heroic age of every nation belongs to the period of its early civilisation. True heroism consists in acting out strength of character, carried to its highest degree of energy. It imposes more upon the vulgar, when it manifests itself in contempt of pain and death; but it is best manifested in that magnanimous calmness, which triumphs over the vicissitudes of life, over the tyranny of power, over popular passions, and over opinion; or in the religious tranquillity through which we support that secret anguish of heart, which is most terrible of all. It is especially manifested in obscure life; where there is no support but our virtue, and man, far from the theatre of glory, struggles alone, without relaxation or hope, against unknown sufferings. It is doubtless right and useful to raise monuments to extraordinary men, who have left traces of light to mark their career to after ages. Providence permitted their heroism to be displayed to the world, that all might be excited by their noble examples. But where will be found crowns for the unknown heroes? Yet it is they, whom we are all called upon to imitate, for they live in our own sphere, in the common condition; the trials, over which they have triumphed, meet us at every step; the power they have opposed to them is the only one which belongs to all men. Glory to this, the true heroism, which has no witnesses of its triumphs, which even wishes to remain unknown!

Strength of character, considered as an active power, is

not the faculty of making and supporting energetic resolutions without motives ; it is the faculty of carrying into resolution an energy and constancy, proportionate to the greatness and importance of the motive ; it is the power of assenting and adhering to motives. It consists partly of sentiment and partly of conviction. It supposes also a liberty of thought, which examines things and judges of their real value. It disdains mean, transient and frivolous interests, and needs a wide and solid foundation. It is animated by a principle eminently moral. Generosity is the principle of vigor, but perseverance is also necessary to carry out the resolutions courageously formed ; for that which charms the heart, the circumstances that aid us at the first moment, change their aspect afterwards ; difficulties are discovered, which we do not resist, unless prepared for them ; self-government should come to aid our dejected will, obliging us to go on as long as the motives are unchanged, and bringing truth and duty as the support of the motives from which habit has worn away the charm.

It is the same with strength of character, considered as a resistance ; we are subject to inward vicissitudes : our ideas are confused, our feelings weighed down, and everything appears changed, because we ourselves have changed. Self-government prevents some of these revolutions, modifies others, and, when it cannot arrest them because they proceed from some disorder in our physical organization, binds the tottering will by the chain of memory.

Thus courage and patience are our resources against possible misfortune, and present misery. The courageous have this advantage over the patient, that they can turn away from the thought of evils not yet in existence, and keep up the hope of escape, and thus have the image of pain transiently present ; while the patient wrestle bodily with a real enemy, from which they cannot disengage themselves ; every instant seeming to exhaust their strength, while at every successive instant new strength is demanded, and to which there seems no limit but the tomb.

The courageous have another advantage over the patient; they generally brave a danger of their own choosing; and Providence, in mercy to our weakness, seems to have cast a veil over the dangers that are inevitable; thus a given danger becomes a sort of pathway, by which to attain a desired end, or to escape a greater evil; and hence it comes, that there are so many different forms of courage, according to the nature of the blessing, or the safety, which we desire to purchase at this price; and it becomes confounded with the calculations of prudence, and sometimes may be resolved into very great fear.*

Patience, on the contrary, is exercised over evils that are unsought, and under the iron yoke of necessity; most frequently without any selfish interest, or expectation of recompense. Men seldom brave death, except in the presence of witnesses; but they ordinarily suffer in solitude. There are many pains of the soul which it is necessary to conceal. Moreover we generally act, in time of danger, and action supports us; but patience is exercised in stillness and in silence. The patient, however, have their advantages; they know the evils which they endure; they can define and measure them; they are exempt from fear that creates a thousand imaginary dangers, and from the vagueness and distance which give to real dangers exaggerated proportions. There is a limit to actual suffering,—there is none to the apprehension of evil. The hardest trial is that which joins the experience of present evil to the prospect of an impending misfortune. And as our deepest grief is in our feeling for the sorrows of others, there is nothing more distressing upon earth, than to see those we love, suffer, and fear to lose them at the same time: at least, there is but one trial more bitter; it is to see those we love debased and corrupted.

* Valor is often an extreme fear of opinion. King William's page, who showed such great intrepidity during the passage from Holland to England in a tempest, explains it in his own words;—'I feared lest they should see that I was afraid.'

When the author of 'the Maxims' took so much pleasure in diminishing the merit of martial courage, he perhaps made a judicious analysis of the kind of courage which does not have its source in strength of character; but he left the merit and glory of true courage untouched. Do we wish to have an infallible means of recognising the truly courageous? Let us examine whether they are equally capable of civil courage, whether they can confront the frowns of the powerful, that they may support the cause of justice and innocence: for real strength of character is one; and when it exists, it is the same in all applications, especially in those which answer most immediately to its principle.

The sentence by which all nations and all ages have condemned fear of danger, and of all evils purely physical, is a sentence unanimously and manifestly pronounced by human instinct against the theory of the book *De l'Esprit*. For on the theory of that, nothing can be more absurd, or even ignominious, than to sacrifice the only true good, from which all others flow, and to which, according to its logic, even honor must be referred. But it has been universally and always felt, that there is for man a good, superior to sensual life and earthly existence. Moralists, and particularly the moralists of antiquity, have had exaggerated ideas concerning strength of character, when they have supposed, that all the means of its triumphs are drawn from the depths of the soul; and that the will can struggle with obstacles, with no other arms than its own resolution. Strength of character is something more useful and elevated, and at the same time less harsh. It does not leave men in darkness. We cannot conceive of a great moral force, unless by the assistance of powerful motives. The faculties of the soul, being protected in their liberty, amid the storms which assail them, by self-government, each of them brings in its aid; while reflection invokes at need every consideration, calculated to sustain, encourage and console. Sometimes strength is attained by yielding to emotions. This virtue, then, is not

mute and immoveable, like material force, or mechanical resistance ; it is rich in thoughts and sentiments. It presents itself to the combat, escorted by allies as numerous as they are useful. The constancy of savages is rather a quality than a virtue ; it is aided by nothing moral ; it arises partly from temperament, and is in some sort muscular. But the firmness or constancy of the wise man is displayed with more lustre in the decay of the physical organs : it supposes no peculiarity of temperament, age, or sex ; but it supposes the habit of feeding upon the meditation of excellence. Thus, in danger he is not satisfied, like the vulgar brave, with confronting peril, and displaying his own energy, struggling for the very pleasure of the struggle ; but the images of the duty to which he is devoted by a reasonable sacrifice, are present to his mind ; he thinks of the benefits which society may receive from his devotedness. He will do better than brave danger :—he will enjoy the sublime pleasure of foreseeing the advantages which his fellow men are to reap from it ; this is his true laurel ; generosity is his courage.

In the pains and sufferings that afflict humanity, self-government lends a double aid to strength of character ; it moderates that natural irritation, which, reacting upon suffering, doubles its intensity and plunges still deeper the arrow which wounds ; and it insensibly turns the sufferer from the tendency which he feels to concentrate himself in the present, and fold himself up in himself. It will turn his being into the circle of virtuous affections and future prospects, where are regions inaccessible to the errors of present suffering ; and to a refuge where we do not cease to suffer, it is true, but where grief no longer absorbs all the faculties of the soul. In like manner, a soul that is filled with noble passions, suffers less from purely physical evils. Those who have suffered much and reflected upon their sufferings, well understand that involuntary impulse, which hurries the soul to the contemplation of its grief, as if in spite of itself and condemns it to increase its own misery : they know the relief

procured by resisting this impulse, by driving grief to the surface of existence, and refusing all concurrence and cooperation in the expressions it causes. But they know also how difficult is this effort; for it must be a calm as well as an energetic effort. It is secretly and powerfully aided by moral influences, which call forth all the activity of the soul to give repose and calmness, and to paralyse and suspend that fatal involuntary cooperation, by which it would redouble its sufferings in reacting upon them. It is doubtless a kind of diversion; nay, it is more; a healing influence circulated through the veins of our sensibility. There is even a pleasure in the very bitterness of suffering, as is well known to the disinterested friend,—to the mother, who suffers for the good of her child. And there is not any trial that has not the same remedy, even among the trials of those affections which are less intimate. ‘Let me die,’ exclaimed the holy Theresa, in the purest flight of divine love; and in those sublime words she did not merely express the desire of a merit to be acquired; she intended also a kind of heroic pleasure, which transforms pain into a sacrifice of love.* This observation is so true, that, even in the art of healing, it is found, that the influence of the moral affections prevents the exasperation of the maladies of the body, and favors the medicine which is applied to cure the patient. But in the sufferings of the heart, or when danger and grief threaten and overwhelm—not ourselves, but those we love, the wise man will need a loftier courage, and a more difficult patience. The heart of sensibility alone knows the secret of that deepest sorrow, in which the heart repels with just indignation all aid, which might distract its attention from the sorrows and dangers of others. Even virtue is here in union with sympathy,

* In observing the effects of pain on soldiers, and on men whose moral existence is not much developed, we find it is free, with them, of the associations of recollection, and of anticipation; of comparisons, and a thousand distressing reflections: and it is this train of association, perhaps, which renders its weight unsupportable.

associating itself, by the most tender interests, with the woes it relieves. Here, then, the functions of self-government experience a considerable change. As suffering is the necessary means of generosity, strength of character accepts the suffering without reserve. Unlike personal sorrow, it is not dejected, nor cowardly, but full of activity; breathing only love; redoubling our strength; suggesting to us means of relief; and inspiring the consolations which may give relief. Here again it is from generosity that self-government draws the aid which contributes to strength of character. There is nothing which we cannot support, or that does not become easy, if we feel that it is useful to those we love. Love is the most certain and ready source of courage. The mere spectacle of our patience is useful to those who witness it; and if our courage cannot be useful to those around us, let us go farther: we shall find other images of excellence, other duties, other hopes: we may always convert our sorrows into the sacrifices of duty. The elevated will comprehend us; and may thus bring us their experience, which reveals more in regard to this sublime refuge, opened to human nature, than we can express in this place. We can now only speak of their example, and invite all to follow it.

It is only in these great revelations, in this last order of moral influences, that are discovered the resources which strength of character opposes to another kind of trial, the most cruel of all, against which man is least defended;—we mean that mourning of the heart, over the last farewell of those we love. Would it be strength of character to arm ourselves with insensibility against this sorrow? Ought we not to hold in horror a virtue which would be faithlessness of heart? Giving up affection to escape from grief, is only weakness of another kind. True strength of character, far from refusing to the affections the faithfulness which belongs to them, aids us, after the fatal hour of separation, to pay a more worthy tribute; aids us still to love while we suffer; and to rise by love still higher than

suffering. It is not by breaking ties, it is by preserving them, that we are capable of resisting despair; for love in its purity is power: it animates even when it afflicts us: it becomes heroism in the bosom of suffering. But that love may still be preserved, that its ties may be renewed, that affection may not be an empty word, separation must not be absolute; it must simply be absence: our souls must still whisper, though in mysterious language, 'We meet again'—and must understand too, all the deep meaning of these words: in short, there must be another future beyond this mortal life, another country besides this earth. And without this future, what would be the affections of man even upon earth? What would he be himself? Surely, the future is ours; that other country is our home! If its image is sometimes veiled, it is not so much that our reason doubts, as that our characters are disarranged and disconcerted. If we want confidence, it is because the soul is in dejection, and wants the energy necessary to conceive, seize, and dwell upon lofty thoughts: like the terrestrial navigator, who, fearing that he may be buried in the waves, cannot conceive the possibility of reaching the shore. But love restores our confidence, because it makes us hope. Strength of character also supports reasonable convictions, because it prevents decay of mind, as well as of heart; disorder of ideas, as well as of feelings.

True strength of character, then, as we mean to define it, differs essentially in this point of view, from the strength of character cried up by the sages of antiquity, particularly by the Stoics. That was only a sort of frozen impenetrability; we might almost say savage, ferocious, barbarous; it was a state contrary to nature. Could it then be a virtue, worthy of the name of strength of character? And more, it was something almost unintelligible, an energy without a motive. It is doubtless necessary that the exercise of self-government should oppose the assaults of sorrow, sufficiently to prevent the agitation it might produce in our moral faculties; but

strength of character, by preserving their equilibrium and harmony, will find in a just grief its own remedy. In the holy images of all that is excellent, we shall recover an intercourse with those who have disappeared from sight;—and by preserving and reanimating our power of practising excellence, still resist the assaults of sadness. Thus a new kind of tribute will enter into the culture of memory, and discover in it a secret charm, by consecrating it to excellence.

To do right,—is not this serving those we love, if we love truly? To become better, is it not to approach them? Thus, the strength of character which is instituted and recognised by virtue, does not mutilate man; it invests him, on the contrary, with all the greatness of human nature. It does not extinguish, but it ennobles grief. It does not make us forget those we mourn; it rather leads us to find them again in mysterious relations, imperfect for us at present, but fruitful in hopes. It does not forbid our tears; it renders them worthy of the one for whom they are shed.

There is, however, another and far different trial of strength of character, which threatens it in the very point where it finds support. It sometimes happens, that the government of our own faculties is partly withdrawn from us, without our being able to resume it. This may be observed, for example, in hypochondriacs, and in certain nervous affections, and various maladies, which, without producing real alienation of mind, yet so sensibly alter the play of our organs, that the soul, which employs and depends upon them, inevitably feels an inward and peculiar malady; objects change their color and form; vague, involuntary, unsought terrors take possession of us, leaving us no power to master them. In vain we call to our aid the recollections of the past and the prospects of the future; the first offer only heart-rending regrets, the last only mournful images. We wish to take refuge in moral meditations, but the sanctuary is closed. We seek the objects of affection to be re-animated by their presence, but they seem to be covered with

a funereal veil, and in spite of itself the soul doubts of their affection and its own. This is a sort of delirium, not entire, but more painful to him who feels it, than total alienation of mind; for he is conscious that his faculties are in disorder: he sees his own difficulty, yet is impotent to restore the harmony. The affliction caused by this inward spectacle redoubles the horror of his situation. How much is the evil increased, if it is joined with violent bodily suffering, or deep mental anguish! What a singular trial of virtue! Who has described such a state? Who has pointed out the regimen that can bear us through it unharmed? It is doubtless extraordinary, and consequently little known; it cannot be imagined by those who never felt it. However, virtue may still triumph. So long as there remains to man a ray to enlighten his mind, an element of liberty in his will, he may conjure the storm. He will suffer much; he will suffer agony of soul; but amid the thick clouds which surround him, faithful to excellence, to which he was consecrated, he may still assert his fidelity, disown the dark thoughts which obscure his vision, and, standing on a rock, amid the lashing waves, raise his eye to heaven, whence serenity will sooner or later descend upon him. Abandoned by all, he will have but a single act of soul to exercise, simple, persevering, but sublime; the act of blind resignation to the Supreme Will.

CHAPTER IV.

INDEPENDENCE AND OBEDIENCE.

WE sometimes take strange ideas concerning Law. And they are unfortunate in proportion as they lead us to mistake the end for which it is given. Some confound Law with force; and essential and primitive law with its expression or organs.

Hence arise false notions about independence and obedience; two dispositions, which we suppose contradictory, although they are perfectly in unison, produced from the same principle, which is justice, and maintained by the same means, self-government.

Far from force being law, * their characters are diametrically opposite: the one is all darkness, the other all light. The spring of the one is mechanical, that of the other, moral. One compels our will, the other lays obligations on it. One makes itself feared, the other venerated. Law can employ force, which is an instrument; but forcé, being but an instrument, cannot create Law, which is a principle. No human law submits by itself, or from itself. All social power is the minister and depositary of an anterior authority,—that of the moral law, made express and positive. It represents society, whose rights it exercises, and whose duties it fulfils. By pretending to be autocratic, it would disavow and annul its title. The obligation we are under to submit to social power, is not derived from the will of society, but the will of society is the expression of the precept, which imposes the obligation—a precept, which rules by its organ, because it rules it itself.

There is a law for the intellect, as well as for the heart, and these unite and aid one another in virtue. The law for the intellect, far from excluding conviction, accompanies it, and sometimes is founded upon it. It is only the power of truth; and the power of truth consists in its direct manifestation, through evidence; or its indirect manifestation through deduction. Hence the expression, ‘the authority of evidence and the authority of reason.’ But deduction may be drawn in different

* This monstrous idea, which derives law from force, and which would overturn all morality, one philosopher has, however, dared to erect into a system. It is true, that Hobbes was the partisan and apologist of absolute power; this explains all: the theory was worthy of the application. The savage also identifies physical force with moral power; but, more reasonable than Hobbes, he deduces the first from the second.

ways, and reason may become consequent to itself, by sometimes renouncing reasoning, and submitting to authority.

To be witnesses ourselves of facts perceived immediately within or without, or to compare elementary notions, is *to perceive*. To deduce general laws from these facts, and complex propositions from these axioms, is *to know*. From perceived facts to deduce other facts, which cannot be directly known, is *to believe*; and as probabilities are often the only result of this last kind of deduction, we also say, *we believe*, when we mean to express our assent to probable facts. If the link which unites to our knowledge the fact which cannot be directly known, be a testimony, belief becomes *faith*; faith adds to belief a moral sentiment of confidence, founded upon esteem or respect.

Faith, then, is a homage, rendered to the authority of testimony. This homage consists in reason's giving up direct demonstration. But the authority of testimony rests upon what certifies the presence, veracity, and capacity of the witness, and upon what gives us reason to think, that the witness has been clearly understood; and all this is in the province of reason. Faith in our fellow men brings only a less or a greater probability. Faith in the Divinity is full and entirely secure, for it is faith in an infallible testimony; in truth itself. But, if the Deity has not granted to the human race the favor of an immediate communication, the certainty of the facts which declare that He has spoken, and that this language has been clearly understood, remains to be established by common logic; and, if He has chosen an organ, the same reasoning must be employed in order to acknowledge that organ. All intellectual law then supposes the authority of evidence.

There is a multitude of facts, with regard to which belief is produced by the testimony of men, without verification of the attested facts; and we ought to be happy in being thus freed from the necessity of a crowd of verifications; but it is because the veracity of the testimony is itself a consequence, deduced

from previously acknowledged truths. Thus, the authority of testimony dispenses with an examination, only when it is itself the accurate product of another examination. We follow our guide with our eyes shut; but it is because we know beforehand who this guide is.

It is therefore overturning all ideas, to substitute absolutely the authority of testimony for examination, and also to make both primitive facts and evidence itself proceed from the authority of testimony. It is reasoning in a circle, and destroying with one hand what we pretend to build with the other.* What has just been said upon the law of the intellect, applies to that which rules the will: as the first proceeds from evidence, so the second flows from duty.

The judiciary of a country are ministers of public morality, as witnesses are the ministers of truth. The first proclaim what is good for society, and the second certify what is real in facts. Authority, then, is essentially beneficent, only so far as it is lawful and faithful to its mission.

There are indeed some duties, concerning which conscience is not decisive, because we do not possess the necessary data for estimating them. There are, also, some persons less capable than others of knowing them, and of measuring their extent; children, for example. There are, besides, some general duties, which cannot be resolved into determined, particular and positive actions, only so far as they take an express and special form, by individual will, or by a majority, which uses language like an individual. Such is that duty, which calls us to serve society: the order given by the magistrate in peace, and by the general in war, is an organ necessary to render this duty applicable and real in practice.

* 'Reason,' says Saint Augustin, 'receives assistance from authority, which makes us know what ought to be believed; and the first authority is that of truth, already known by evidence.' In another work, he maintains the contrary paradox. 'Two guides,' he says, 'are offered for our instruction, authority and reason. Authority is the most simple, and is the way for ordinary men; reason is the guide reserved for the wise man.'

Respect for social order is in the first rank of duties. Now, in society there are collective rights, which can only be exercised, and collective actions, which can only be performed, by a single person, or by a small number, in the name of all : there are certain general and correlative operations, which must be executed in harmony, that order may subsist, and that they may produce some fruits. Hence authority is confided to a single person for the maintenance of this harmony.

There is no right which does not suppose a duty, nor duty which does not include a right ; it is therefore a strange error to suppose, that rights and duties are distinct or even contrary : they differ apparently, only because the same principle is considered in two different points of view.

Lawful authorities can no more be opposed to one another than duties. Morality, which is *one*, is their common source. But they can be reciprocally limited, as duties circumscribe each other.

But the individual is subjected, not only to foreign authorities, he also exercises over himself a peculiar authority ; he has his rights secured by a common authority, even as he is to respect the same rights toward others. Hence the distinction of independence and obedience, their limitations, and their harmony. Being parallel powers, they touch without striking upon one another ; each one is perverted as soon as it invades, and each acquires more extent, in proportion as the other is better defined.

Independence resists violence, and obedience submits to duty. Independence breaks away the obstacles which are opposed to the recognition of our rights ; obedience represses within us the movements, which threaten the rights of others. Independence is a kind of obedience to the law of our own reason ; obedience is a kind of independence, which triumphs over the passions. Self-government gives power to resist tyranny, and to accomplish duty : it at once prohibits servility and licentiousness : it frees us from the fear of oppression : it teaches

us to suffer ourselves to be ruled by what protects us : it calls independence to repress arbitrariness, and obedience to serve justice, and both to be the auxiliaries of virtue.

Yet we invert these two functions continually. Obedience is placed upon the ground of independence, and becomes servility ; independence is put upon that of obedience, and becomes rebellion ; one bows before force, the other braves law. This double mistake is sometimes made by the same man. It is not only the fault of inferiors, but often proceeds from those who command ; when the latter are deceived about the nature of the power, which they exercise, they mislead those who obey, whether inferiors then submit or resist. Besides, obedience is commonly neglected by those to whom it would be most useful, and independence by those who have the best right to use it. There are some men, who might be said not to know how to will, and are charmed to find some one who will take the trouble to will for them. They not only dare not compromise with force, but they go to meet, and seem attracted by it, as if it would infuse into them the energy of vital warmth, which they need : they feel as if they cannot be moved but by a foreign impulse. They not only respect force, but feel tenderly towards it, and seem almost to love it ; they admire it in proportion as they are weak, and this admiration becomes worship ; they have to make a religion of servitude, and persuade themselves that they fulfil a duty, that they may conceal the shame and enjoy a more perfect repose. They reserve all their indignation for the oppressed ; if he oppose the shadow of a resistance, they do not pardon him for thus troubling the security they seek under the shelter of material power ; they almost bear malice towards innocence, if it importune and accuse them of their servility, and remind them of rights, which they have endeavoured to forget. But, if weakness of character be a manifest cause of servility, personal feeling is not a less fruitful and common cause. We range ourselves under the standard of force ; not that we may be exposed to its blows, but

that we may receive its protection. We go to it, as to the most direct and simple means of obtaining, without industry or merit, the accomplishment of our wishes. It is an ignominious barter, in which we exchange our rights for the objects of our ambition. As affection and veneration are the two tributes, which cannot be won by force, they compose the tributes that servility offers, as the most precious and rare. And for the very reason that force is not lawful, and has no titles, the servile carry to it, as the surest means of pleasing it, factitious titles, which may make it lawful in its own opinion. Victorious injustice never wants cowards to be servile to it, courtiers to flatter it, and mean sophists to justify it. They are given, or rather sold to it by interest. Among the different forms of personal feeling, there is one which appears, at first, not to conduce to servility of character; at least, it haughtily pretends to be free from it: it is vanity. It is true the vain often resist reasonable and just authority; for they are unwilling to acknowledge moral and intellectual authority; but triumphant force always finds them much better for its purposes than we should be tempted to believe. History testifies this constantly. The powerful traffic with them, and offer them in return for the sacrifice of real rights, some part of their glory and influence; the shame of the sacrifice is concealed, and the recompense glitters; besides, the vain will indemnify themselves for the humiliations they undergo, by those which they will distribute below themselves. There are few causes which make us more dependent upon other men, than the inexhaustible interests of vanity. Yet men wish to appear independent; there is but one way for the vain, and they seize upon it; and it is to disavow, and to violate subordination. Among nations which pride governs, several have known how to enjoy liberty; but in those where vanity rules, not one.

The success of force deludes the imagination of men. It is the delusion, which accompanies the sight of all that is extraordinary and gigantic. We are inclined to suppose something

marvellous in its principle of action. By means of this vagueness, which surrounds a wonderful thing, the phantom of a mysterious authority is introduced; false ideas of dignity and glory gather round the gloomy image of force, and lend it a counterfeit brilliancy. We are dazzled and fairly subjected. We cannot presume that one human creature can subdue another, without the aid of some unknown moral power; and while admiring the effect, we respect the cause. This especially happens, when power, although not rightful, is supported by talent and genius. Servitude appears honorable, because we think, that, by serving the successful, we borrow some of their glory and honours. But this illusion takes place only because the sacred notions of justice have not preserved in the soul the authority, which belongs to them: we are seduced only because we have suffered ourselves to be corrupted. In general, all servility is great unfaithfulness to the moral law. Servility takes away from justice, what it carries as a tribute to power. After being spoiled of its own rights, it will willingly abandon those of others, or rather it commences with this last sacrifice.

Of what use is free space to a man whose limbs are paralysed? Yet such is the pretended independence of him, to whom everything is possible, except ruling himself. True independence belongs only to the free soul. It is self-government which confers moral emancipation, and it is by obtaining this control, that man becomes *sui juris*, as lawyers say. Then he will be able to conceive, undertake and accomplish all that he is capable of, and to act with all his faculties. His thoughts, opinions, sentiments and resolutions will be his own. He will become creative; for man can create only by help of what he draws forth from himself: he creates by the power of the will alone. He will be able to do without the independence which fortune gives, and which is reserved to so small a number of social situations. He can preserve, even in chains, the freedom he has received, for he will acknowledge no other master than himself, and no one can make him bend. The despot,

armed with all his thunders, and surrounded with all his train, will turn pale in his presence. Truth and equity will be a secure deposit in his hand. He will become upon earth a new, a moral power, and will rally around him the conscience of the good, and will repress tyranny by the majesty of his attitude alone. Should he become the martyr of a holy cause, his example will live in posterity to encourage the timid, and be one day the object of emulation.

Political liberty protects all lawful independence, and leaves access to no servility, and at the same time circumscribes our independence within proper limits. It is only *justice secured*. It therefore establishes and maintains the difficult and advantageous equilibrium between independence and obedience, and strengthens them mutually. But, that justice may be secured, the rights of all must be determined, and represented in the action of the political powers to which all are subject, and by which all are covered with a common shield; observing, however, that order and stability are in the first rank of rights and of wants, since they cover the others with a general safeguard. The flatterers of power deceive it about its true interests, when they repeat the common axiom, that the principle of its authority must be covered with a cloud. Power, which is unlawful or uncertain about its titles, is the only power which this advice can benefit; for by the help of obscurity force may be taken for authority; but power founded upon just pretensions, will only gain by producing them; otherwise its authority might be taken for force, and it would lose in conviction what it might appear to gain in extent. Besides, it is only by determining the true principle of authority, that we can discover its bounds; but all authority is weakened and compromised, as soon as it passes its lawful limits, because it then loses its character; puts its moral rights in question; makes itself doubtful; challenges resistance; makes resistance just in a degree; and even opens access to unjust resistance. Thus, it becomes a source of difficulty, instead of a means of preservation. Discussion begins and

becomes dangerous ; for it can only be terminated by distinctions which the multitude cannot comprehend. The secret of always commanding successfully, is to command only what we ought ; and the ascendancy of law consists in its remaining irreproachable. Thus, obedience or rightful submission is not less necessary to public liberty than individual independence : it even should be severe in proportion to the extent of the latter ; for obedience is the condition of individual independence, and, that the one may be preserved, the other must know how to respect.

With what pretext soever pride may seek to cover its resistance to lawful authority, resistance cannot be honorable. On the contrary, obedience is honorable, because it is a homage rendered to the moral law, and also because it is one of the most generous sacrifices to the moral law that it is in the power of man to make. There is much more true courage in obeying when we ought, than in resisting, were it only because the former is much more difficult than the latter. ‘By obedience,’ you say, ‘I should renounce my will and ownership.’ But is not obedience a voluntary act ? What is it to obey, except to know how to command ourselves ? The vain and frivolous, who pretend to be their own masters, although they are only slaves to their own inclinations, would confess, if they were sincere, that they only resist obedience, because obedience is difficult ; that is, because it expresses a sacrifice to duty. How great is the heart, where is enshrined justice, as in a temple, and where its worship is preserved in all its purity ! Blind that we are, to what greatness might we aspire, if we feared to debase ourselves, and should consecrate ourselves to justice ! Doubtless, law must be just in itself, that obedience may take this character ; but if it were not just, would it be law ?

The weak have their kind of opposition to the laws of authority. Law not only commands to refrain and forbear, which is often difficult for the weak, but in certain cases it al-

so directs to act and to persevere ; prescribing efforts at which the weak are terrified. Besides, the weak are changeable and capricious ; they want the unexpected and new, and fear what is fixed and determined. The effeminate resist obedience as they would a severe regimen. Not only the passionate, but the enervated soldier refuses the yoke of discipline.

But the principal cause of resistance to the laws of authority, is always insatiable, personal feeling : law curbs this, because it puts reins upon it. We say we wish to be independent, but in reality we want to usurp. Obedience, finally, is meritorious and useful, in proportion as it is faithful to its principle, and consequently only so far as it is moral and enlightened. If we obey law from the same motive from which we submit to force, we do not obey, we yield ; and if we submit to law from interest merely, we follow a selfish inclination ; we still do not obey. In all this there is not a single idea of duty. We often find in children's books, apologues composed to teach them obedience, by proving to them that parents and masters only command them to do what is really useful. It would be better to address these fables to parents and masters, rather than to children ; because they would then learn what they are often ignorant of—the true use they ought to make of their authority ; but they give to children a false idea of obedience, if we abide by the morality which results from them. The child must learn to see in submission moral obligation, and not utility only. Besides, you might give him an argument which would turn against your own views. Indeed we must never forget, that man very often does not embrace what is most useful for him, even after having discovered it. If you wish to teach obedience, teach two things,—justice and self-control ; the one as a law, the other as a means of fulfilling it. Obedience, when clearly understood, is composed of respect and confidence. The sentiment of respect is something which softens, collects, calms, and purifies ; it benefits and quickens the heart, and produces a kind of religious impression. To

know how to recognise and venerate what is above us, is to approach it; and to feel our inferiority, is to prepare ourselves for becoming great. Respect elevates the soul, because it develops the faculty of appreciating what merits its homage; and it establishes the only possible intercourse between ourselves and what is above us, also making us worthy of cultivating it.

The sentiment of confidence encourages and gives repose. It supplies us with the strength we fail in, and preserves and nourishes what we possess. It is noble, because there is always something noble in what is generous, and because confidence takes us from ourselves and gives us to others. The forgetfulness which accompanies it, disposes the heart to openness, and thus renders it more accessible to the affections.

Love makes obedience easy and delightful; and obedience, rightly understood, prepares the way for love. It is love which gives childhood docility; gratitude continues this influence by giving to confidence its noblest securities. Obedience is then a great and general means of progress for the human race. It serves to sum up and personify the ideas of excellence for the use of those, who might not be capable of finding them out, in all the generality of their principles, in the whole extent of their consequences; and it clothes those ideas in a familiar language. Is it not with this design that God has so disposed things upon earth, that the most common condition of man is that of obeying, and that he has called the most ignorant and numerous class, and the weakest beings more especially to obedience; so that civil subordination becomes a kind of ladder, destined to raise us progressively to the knowledge of our duties, while at the same time, it is, as it were, a succession of supports, designed to assist us in our efforts? Thus we may remark, that a great number are disciplined by the practice of obedience. We also see some men, who are improved by the exercise of authority; and it should always be so. We can well conceive how he who is called to the honor of serving as an organ of the law of excellence, should be penetrated entire-

ly with its spirit, while he is its depositary ; and how deeply he should meditate upon it, that he may serve it faithfully. Yet experience shows us, that the exercise of authority does not often do good to those to whom it is entrusted ; sometimes it even corrupts them. Less occupied with the deposite they have received, than with the privilege they enjoy, turning their eyes, not towards the source from which their mission comes, but towards the theatre for its accomplishment, they use authority as a kind of right which naturally belongs to them ; they accept the obedience of others as a personal tribute, vanity usurping and corrupting the power in their own hands ; and while thinking to exalt, they debase themselves ; thus they resign their true dignity, and, pretending to command others, they lose power over themselves.

Happy is he, who can understand how to be free while obeying, and to serve while commanding !

CHAPTER V.

RIGHT DIRECTION OF ACTIVITY.

God has destined man to be the prime agent on earth, to reign by means of the arts, and, as it were, to complete his own work, by subduing, regulating, and cooperating with the powers of nature, by favoring the developement of its various organizations, and by transforming, combining and appropriating its productions to a multitude of uses. He has inspired this superior agent, therefore, with an unbounded desire for motion ; exciting him to both internal and external activity ; the one consisting in the exertion of the will and the operations of the mind, and the other in the play of the organs and the exercise of the body. From this well known desire, properly satisfied,

will spring abundant external fruits, and the most delightful internal state. If, on the contrary, this fundamental, imperious desire is not satisfied, or satisfies itself blindly, we may fear all kinds of destruction and disorder without and within ; all kinds of trouble, suffering and error. The rightly directed exercise of activity is also the essential condition of the development of the faculties of the mind and heart ; it is necessary, that it should mark their progress, prepare their applications, and preserve habitual harmony among them. It is to the health of the soul, what motion is to the health of the body. It belongs to a good and wise civil government to prepare the means in the external world, for individual activity to take its regular course, and to divide the labor among individuals. The wisdom of such a government will consist, especially, in leaving the paths free ; in removing obstacles and extending impartial protection to all. It belongs to a good and wise moral government, or to self-control, to regulate the activity of each individual, by pointing out the most useful career, by keeping him in it, and ordering the employment of all his faculties, in a manner the most likely to make him pass through this career profitably and with honor. Society often errs in contributing to the development of activity among its members, while, at the same time, it excludes them from most of the ways in which they could hope to exercise it ; but we often err on our part also, in not taking advantage of the ways which are open to us.

Sometimes, when feeling this want, we are ignorant of its value and the desire which it involves ; and we misunderstand the cause of our inward suffering. We seek happiness everywhere, except in activity, which can alone give it. We thus become troublesome to ourselves ; objects lose their value and interest ; and because we are useless, everything becomes indifferent. Being ourselves good for nothing, nothing seems to us good and profitable. This moral disease especially threatens conditions which are fortunate, or reputed such ; and sometimes poisons all the enjoyments of fortune. Those who are

affected with such a disease, being supported by vanity in the false ideas which make happiness depend upon exemption from fatigue, refuse the only remedy which might relieve them; tormented by a secret inquietude, they seek change continually; they call for new sensations in a thousand ways; but the impressions they receive, are for the most part quite passive; therefore, they do not satisfy the wants which oppress them; indeed these may become so many stimulants, which still excite this secret tendency that they cannot define. Then, not being able to take its course, their natural desire, deceived and perverted, will perhaps take strange and capricious forms; perhaps will be converted into a morose and gloomy misanthropy; perhaps will plunge them into the abysses of voluptuousness; perhaps will suggest the insatiable desires of vanity, until moral strength is exhausted and at length consumed. Thus, by the effect of this internal contradiction, which we nourish within us, existence is lost in a sleep of apathy.

It is not opulence itself that involves this disease; it is the leisure which is often the consequence of opulence. But it is easy to create for ourselves in the midst of riches, a great and noble sphere of activity, as in mediocrity we can remain idle. In all ranks, we meet parasites, who cannot mark out for themselves any career, who seem bound by no ties, and who move on, as it were, by chance. If they have neither expansion of ideas nor fire of soul, they will enjoy a kind of negative happiness; but wo to them, however little they may realize their misfortune, if they always remain like strangers in the midst of the great human family!

The same principle of moral disease, which produces a kind of marasmus in some, may cause a burning fever in others; and we often perceive this towards the period between childhood and youth. It is then, especially, that the desire for action is felt more deeply, because all the faculties are impatient to come into play: but it is then, also, that inexperience and want of reflection may expose him who is urged on by

them, to misunderstand the secret wishes which agitate him, and that, eager to diffuse himself without, he may easily neglect to study what is going on in the depths of his heart. Besides, labor, which is the true vocation of activity, is a uniform and serious thing; and the impatience peculiar to this age, does not allow him to recognise in it that animated movement which his nature demands.

Sometimes, by a singular contradiction, while we are urged on by the desire of activity, we are kept in idleness by effeminacy; the imagination keeps up a vague inquietude; the will has not sufficient spring to embrace a sphere of positive operations; and we can neither enjoy action nor repose. Sometimes, when understanding and perceiving our need of activity, we err by seeking a course for it, which is, in fact, impracticable, and do not let it take that which is possible. Sometimes we undertake several irreconcilable courses at once; at other times, we prematurely abandon that, in which we are engaged, and change unnecessarily, forgetting the great advantage there always is in going on, were it only to profit by experience. And sometimes we rush into a career, without taking time to make the necessary provision; we advance in it without having well considered its end, and the successive periods, or we go on without plan or reflection. Then we experience reverses, and are weary, discouraged, and perhaps irritated. Thus we bring disorder and inquietude around us, and are discontented with ourselves. We find we have already passed over a portion of life; we are astonished and afflicted at the errors we have committed; we think them remediless; bitterness takes possession of the heart; life is discolored; we perhaps recur to the most dangerous emotions to divert or reanimate ourselves, and we prefer suffering to listlessness. Most of the human passions are only the overflowings of an activity which has mistaken its true course. It is in this sense only that Hobbes says, 'The wicked man is a strong child;' or in other words, wickedness is a power unable to regulate itself, because it is ignorant of itself

We see how self-control prevents or restrains these various aberrations. First, it leads to the study of self; for we must be self-collected, before we can observe ourselves; we must learn to measure our strength, before rushing upon the arena; we must employ all the authority we can obtain over ourselves, in order to oblige our heart to reform its desires, and our understanding its judgment. And self-control also leads us to repress those foolish inclinations which seek the impossible; to accommodate ourselves to the sometimes severe and hard exigences of reality;—to conquer the difficulties, which can be overcome, how hard soever they may be; to stop before those which are insurmountable; and to rise up courageously after falling into mistakes. It regulates the action and measure of all our faculties, and prevents them from being wasted. Beside choice and unity of purpose, two special conditions are necessary to prevent activity from being destructive, and to make it fruitful. These are perseverance and method, which, when united, compose conduct, but which, even separate, are rarely well observed, and whose union is rarer still. A good internal government, that is, self-control, contributes very much to fulfil these conditions.

Most of our designs are rather the result of chance and circumstances, than of our own calculations; even those which exert the most important influence over our destiny, are not dwelt upon with much maturity and reflection. We cannot resist the occasion which solicits us. We do not choose, but merely accept. He alone chooses, who commands; but we can only command ourselves, not events; and for want of knowing how to decide as to what circumstances depend upon ourselves and what absolutely resist us, we struggle against the inevitable, and neglect the possible. We neither know how to create a condition conformable to our character, nor to conform our character to necessary conditions, among which we must, especially, include those arising from social institutions and conventional arrangements. Hence proceed so

many false and incomplete situations in the world, and the uneasiness which is the consequence of them ; and hence constraint, uncertainty, confusion, and suffering, in the exercise of activity.

Our purposes, being thus determined by chance, are unconnected ; and are not parts of the same plan ; they have no relation with anything. Life is no longer formed of a single tissue, but is composed of inlaid work, joined, and not woven together. Unity of purpose economizes the faculties, redoubles their energy by concentrating them, and makes them conspire together to lend each other mutual aid. But there can be no unity where there is no law which assigns and preserves to each thing its rank : in society it is public authority ; in the arts, genius ; it is reason in the sciences, and in the conduct of life self-control ; but self-control only in so far as this is the minister of virtue.

Perseverance facilitates, brings to perfection, and consolidates the execution of the plan conceived, and preserves its results when it is accomplished. By continuing to go on in the same way, at every step we take light increases, obstacles are removed, habits are contracted, experience is acquired, the use of means becomes more familiar, the relation of details to the whole is more clearly defined, we obtain security, and our operations are more closely connected. Every beginning is an experiment ; but every experiment inevitably involves some error and some loss of strength. If we make many attempts, between which there is little analogy, we shall be much fatigued, and become incapable of producing anything. If we interrupt a performance, every time we resume it, it will be beginning again ; and every suspension will be indicated by the loss of time and material, by some imperfection and some want of harmony in the whole.

The world is full of people who have conceived and undertaken great and noble things. Perhaps there is not one who has not formed some brilliant plans in early life, and hoped to

realize them. All these buds of promise, however are, as it were, borne away and dissipated by the winds, before their maturity. We see nothing but baffled or unconnected and incomplete performances. What was wanting? To a great number, doubtless, either knowledge, talents, the means of execution, or favorable circumstances. To a greater number, however, nothing was wanting, perhaps, but perseverance to execute the plan, and carry it on to its end. The Athens of Italy is ornamented with a crowd of temples, which rival each other in beauty of architecture; but not one is finished. The Tuscans in this are a representation of what we all do every day.

Inspiration makes men of talents, and experience men of skill: the first conceive, the second succeed. These observations do not merely apply to the works of art, and the management of affairs; they equally apply to the general plan of our conduct, in which our morality and happiness are involved. Here the applications seem less evident; we especially are slow in convincing ourselves of the radical defect of our plan, or rather of the absence of all uniform plan in practice. But we may take example from material operations, in which the advantages of perseverance are more evident, and are acknowledged, even by those who cannot submit to the observance of it. It is deplorable, that those beings most often are wanting in perseverance, whom nature has endowed with eminent powers and treated with especial favor; it might be said, that perseverance is a compensation granted to mediocrity. Distinguished minds always have sentiments superior to their station; and views more extensive than the sphere in which they are placed. They contain mysterious things within them, for which they cannot account, and which, being developed, modify their dispositions. They are therefore exposed to be diverted from, and to mistake the course, which is suitable for them, and to be dissatisfied with what they have begun. They seem to struggle with destiny. Moreover, as they cannot guide themselves

by common experience ; as they penetrate into unexplored regions ; as they rise higher than others, and find no more beaten roads ; they sometimes get entangled in the midst of precipices, and are forced to retrace their steps. But change of plan is generally the consequence of weakness of character. Weakness is restless, impatient, and seeks change ; it cannot adhere to the motives which suggested determinations ; it abandons them at the first trial ; it yields to all impressions, and especially to those, which are new, because they are most vivid ; it has no perseverance, because it has no self-derived impulse. In weak characters also, the imagination is less curbed and exerts more influence, and therefore it makes conduct changeable ; it continually balances the being, who has become its sport, between contrary exaggerations. Uniformity of action is in several respects, a difficult, painful, and fatiguing thing ; it requires two kinds of effort, which are almost opposite in their nature ; it requires us to know how to sustain and control ourselves at the same time ; besides, it is without attractions, or rather, in proportion as it is prolonged, it takes their charm from natural things ; and novelty has such brilliant allurements ! How can we be astonished, then, that so many people leave their work half executed, and that we hardly ever find anything really accomplished ? Those alone persevere and finish, who have learned to be masters of themselves. Method in the administration of minute things is what perseverance is in the fixedness of the principal idea. Man, being unable to obtain anything from nothing, and having the power only to collect, his creations are mere combinations, which are more learned in proportion as they are complex and composed of various elements. Order then is the first merit of his works. As it alone constitutes their beauty, so alone it warrants their solidity and usefulness ; for it determines the relations of parts to each other, and the relations of the whole to the end. Order draws beforehand the general plan ; estimates the advantages ; decides the conditions ; foresees the difficulties ; and

marks the favorable occasions. Method establishes the preliminaries, which prepare the materials of the edifice. The elements, upon which we are to work, are offered to us, scattered, and in heterogeneous medleys ; method draws them out, compares, classes, and puts them at our disposal, furnishing us with means of judging by a glance of the relative fitness of each, and the place it should occupy in the structure. Method creates means of execution, adjusts the parts and regulates the course of successive operations, so that each may profit by those which precede, and prepare for those which are to follow. It does not suffer an instant of time, a single effort, or any portion of matter to be lost ; it prevents lassitude and disgust, because, at every step, it allows us to measure our progress ; it keeps up our strength, and encourages us, by the secret influences of the harmony which breathes from it. Method judges of the advantages, the use, and the seasonableness of what has been executed ; it furnishes means of preservation, and puts them within reach ; it alone can render wealth profitable, preventing that confusion, through which nothing is properly used. It simplifies what is complicated ; and diffuses universal light. It serves as an aid to memory, as inspiration to imagination, and as light to the judgment. It calms and gives energy to the will, and produces facility and security in action.

Even to see order reign around us, enables us to do everything better, and feel a certain degree of inward serenity. The order which is diffused without, penetrates us by a secret sympathy, and puts us involuntarily in unison with it.

But method supposes beforehand the power of governing at once both our minds and the movements of our soul. It is a privilege of internal liberty. It is an expression of law ; that is, of enlightened authority. It is the very genius of reason, ruling all the faculties of our being.

Abandon things to themselves, and, moved by heterogeneous impulses, their confused jumbling will produce what we call

chance. This will happen to our ideas, sentiments and resolutions, if we do not first know how to govern them, and to bring them under the power of reason, which ought to be their regulator.

CHAPTER VI.

TEMPER.

THERE is within us an influence, which does not proceed from ourselves, and yet does not come from without ; of which the origin, progress and character are equally undetermined. It is a kind of moral Proteus, a truly hidden power, which so governs our intellect, that we think we really see things such as it suggests them to us, and which so governs our will, that we think we wish for what it prescribes to us. There is nothing logical or argumentative in it ; we know not whence it comes, or at what it aims. Everything about it seems spontaneous and capricious. It is not one of our faculties, and yet it is identified and incorporated with them, modifying them at pleasure, and concealing them from our own observation. It moulds our minds and characters ; sometimes giving them so singular and unexpected an aspect, that we can hardly recognise them ourselves. Sometimes smiling and severe, it delights to adorn objects, and exhibit them in their most agreeable aspects ; making everything seem easy to us ; flattering our hopes, quieting our vexations, disposing us to calmness, to forgetfulness of self, and seeming to bring both our inward life and all that surrounds us into harmony. Sometimes sad, restless, and even savage, it throws a pall over nature, peoples the future with dark phantoms, agitates us without cause, pursues us with vain terrors, makes us torment ourselves, seems to rob us of our dear-

est affections, to corrupt, to poison everything, even our thoughts, condemning our hearts to a kind of exile, and urging us to diffuse abroad our internal troubles. Thus it disconcerts the preconceptions of philosophy and morality; sometimes seeming to render their aid useless, so natural and light does it make the task which is imposed upon us; and sometimes seeming to render us unable to follow their counsels, so thick is the cloud with which it invests us.

We see it lavish its favors upon the most ordinary beings, and overwhelm with its tyranny the most distinguished; to sport with the same man, and put him in contradiction to himself, by making him feel by turns its tyranny or favors, not only at different periods of his life, but at different hours of the day. We are accustomed to call this power *temper*. Perhaps it has not occupied the attention of moralists sufficiently. There is something vague and confused in it, which escapes observation. But it would be rendering a great service to most men to mark it out for them, and teach them to know it; for, like all impostors, it loses the greatest part of its means of success, as soon as it is unmasked.

Let those rejoice, whom this hidden power has treated as favorites: let them accept its assistance, and profit by it, using their strength better, for the great object of life,—progress towards perfection. They would be guilty if they did no better than others, since it costs them less to do well. But let them have two reflections constantly present to their minds; let them not forget, that excellence, when it is only the effect of a happy temper, is a blessing rather than a merit, and that they must therefore take care not to glory in it, nor reckon it among their titles to esteem; and let them not forget how inconstant and changeable this disposition is, and let them expect to need greater courage, when it shall cease, or change into a contrary mood.

To those whom it has chosen for its victims, it offers most abundant cause for the exercise of self-control, which is more

difficult in this case, as they must seize a fleeting shadow, and can hardly distinguish the features of the enemy they are to oppose, and as a great effort of reflection is requisite to be sure of its presence. It is also the more difficult because this enemy presses upon them on all sides, seizes them, as it were, bodily, and seeks to take possession of the arms that must be employed against him.

The external education, which the customs of the world give, teaches us to subdue the effects of temper, in our daily social intercourse, as a means of succeeding and pleasing: it teaches us that for the latter object an enlightened and cultivated reason, fidelity to the affections, generous and delicate conduct, are not enough; perhaps indeed it teaches us that they are of much less importance than charming manners, facility of intercourse, condescension and grace. But, thus debarred from outward expressions, the temper may only make greater ravages than where it is unshackled. And we frequently see people, who wear in society a serene brow, and are gay and obliging, make those who impose less restraint upon them, pay dearly for the momentary sacrifice, vexing their own families with their temper, even obliging their friends to endure its effects, and their most intimate friends too; because they feel more safe in intimacy, and are more at ease. Yet the closer the ties are which unite us to others, the worse it is to deprive them of the enjoyment they expect from us—the worse it is to grieve them and make them suffer; for we may thereby put them in danger of mistaking our true sentiments, may check the overflowings of confidence, destroy their self-surrendering trust, and interrupt the interchange of consolations and advice. Thus is sometimes produced and nourished that susceptibility, which makes us imagine we are constantly injured by those among whom we live, as if we enjoyed a kind of satisfaction and complacency in thinking others guilty, which susceptibility, after having made us commit real faults, suggests new ones to justify the first; so that, by a series of sad reactions, what was at first

only an involuntary impulse; terminates in injustice, and sometimes embitters the most sacred and precious relations of life.

Let us pity those, however, whom this hidden disease torments, and let us not condemn them with too much severity; for it is upon themselves its blows chiefly fall.

An undefined uneasiness besets them; a strange poison circulates in their veins; they suspect, accuse, and punish themselves without cause; for temper, in order to oppress them, may even take the form of remorse. They fly from themselves as from a troublesome guest, and find themselves again in the midst of the distractions which they go out of themselves to seek. To them nature seems to have dried up the sources of innocent pleasures, which are poured out upon others.

What we call *temper* appears to be a general, and more or less habitual, disposition of the imagination, which, without being attached to any precise object, diffuses over all the same hue, and afterwards, from the intimate relation of our ideas with our feelings, extends, if not into the depths of the heart, at least upon its surface, and is confounded with our inclinations. Sometimes this disposition is a natural effect of physical temperament, or of the momentary state of the organs. Then, if it have a sorrowful character, morality has no remedies to carry to the principle of the evil. We cannot help suffering; we are merely permitted to suffer with patience: we cannot help being solicited by impulses fatal to our character and happiness; we are allowed merely to disavow them and refuse ourselves to them. We must establish a wall of separation between these blind influences, and our own will; and take refuge in our conscience, as in an asylum which they cannot reach. As vigilant sentinels, we must be constantly on our guard against any subtle dangers which may surprise us. At the moment of a crisis, and when a kind of fatal delusion transforms the realities of things to our eyes; when a veil seems to cover the images of the true and good, which charmed us in happier moments, we must oppose to them the testimony of our remembrances; and let the

storm pass away, in hope of the return of a more serene horizon. Then we shall acknowledge, how advantageous it is for man to have formed for himself, beforehand, fixed and rational maxims, that regulate his sentiments and settle his opinions, so that he may never be unprovided and defenceless in those deserts, which he must sometimes traverse to complete the journey of life. Thus the prudent man will provide himself, during the brightness of the day, with the knowledge and dispositions by which he is to be guided in the midst of darkness; and congratulate himself for having established his self-culture upon solid foundations.

But if the state of the temper depends partly upon physical causes, it equally depends upon moral causes; and if in this respect we cannot directly check its effects, we can indirectly prevent them, by acting upon principle.

A peevish temper is the natural consequence of the satiety and disgust which accompany excess of pleasure; of the lassitude which succeeds to the violence of passion; and of the mistakes which punish presumptuous ambition. It arises from the contrast between our pretensions and our situation, between our means and our desires. It arises not only from our discontent with our fate, but from every species of uneasiness: it is the sad consequence of a want of self-satisfaction; of the remembrance of irreparable errors, and of our feeling the necessity of covering and concealing shameful weaknesses. A black vapor seems to arise from every moral distemper, and obscure the soul's horizon. Even the aberrations of virtue may produce a similar effect, through the abuse of solitude and the excess of austerity.

Hence temperance derives new motives to avoid all exaggeration, as well as new motives to moderate our wishes to the measure of the condition to which we are confined. Hence also arises a new argument for accepting the pleasures offered to virtue; for enjoying peace and serenity; for not breaking the alliance of duty and happiness; nor, of rejecting

the doctrines, which, according to the instructions of morality, heighten the value of true and pure pleasures, and save us from exaggerations, which might render us too severe towards ourselves. If we wish to try a remedy, which, when we are beset by the vapors of a sad and gloomy temper, never will be inefficacious, let us seek to diffuse among others, consolation, happiness, or even mere pleasure. This remedy is infallible. If we are in a solitary situation, in which we can find no aid, and cannot be useful to others, the care of mere animals, relieving their sufferings, foreseeing their wants, and procuring them comfort, has been known to clear away these vapors. Weak characters are most exposed to be surprised and governed by temper. Everything wounds them, and they do not know how to resist. They cannot *will* what they desire. They contradict, belie, and torment themselves. They live in chaos. They are not firm enough to remain bound to their resolutions and principles. They are discontented with things, because they are unable to master them; and with themselves, because they continually disappoint their own expectations.

CHAPTER VII.

ERRORS IN SELF-GOVERNMENT.

Among the numerous errors, which arise from the association of ideas, one of the most common leads us to overrate the value of the instrument, and confound means with the end. The very important consequences of this mistake to morality, we have, more than once, had occasion to remark; and among its consequences we may now observe, that it has served to give credit to false and dangerous ideas of the merit of self-control. Men forget that this merit is essentially relative; and

suppose, that we cannot sufficiently triumph over ourselves; that virtue consists in this triumph rather than in the end, for which it is gained; that it is good morality to sacrifice one's self as a victim, without considering upon what altar the sacrifice is made. And has-not the same error led us to transfer the ideas of glory to public opinion, which is only its organ?

It is true that by preserving the direction of all the powers, keeping each one in its proper rank, and by presiding over the whole economy of our internal being, we fulfil one of our chief duties, and at the same time present the noble and majestic spectacle, of the accomplishment of a mission received from God. For, in so doing, we support the dignity of our nature, and preserve one of the noblest works of the Creator, to the end for which it was destined. This is one of those duties, which admit of no interruption. But although man ought always to have command of himself, it does not follow, that he ought continually to repress and compel; or that every exercise of self-government thereby becomes worthy of praise. Law is not always in action, nor is it an insatiable principle. There is sometimes more real strength in the attitude of repose; and often more wisdom of government in moderating the sacrifices that are required of us. The exercise of this internal power, like that of external power in society, changes its nature, ceasing to deserve esteem, when it ceases to be useful. Tributes are not an obligation, when they cannot be made use of. This fundamental mistake seems to us to have led the Stoics of antiquity astray: it has reappeared more than once in modern sects; and it every day practically deludes excellent people. In reading the writings of the Stoics, we meet continually with what logicians call a *petitio principii*: upon every occasion they recommend strength of soul; but when we press them with questions upon the definition of the sovereign good, upon the purpose of the efforts they demand of us, and of the constraint they impose upon us, still it is to strength of soul that they refer us, as if we sought for the pleasure of

fighting, and that ourselves might be witnesses of this tournament. The same observations might be made about the virtues of Sparta and Rome, which are so much recommended to our admiration. They are a serious, laborious, and, perhaps, cruel gymnastic, but sometimes without any real object. In several of these pretended heroes, we seek in vain for successors to Hercules and Theseus, revengers of the oppressed, and destroyers of monsters; we find only rivals of Milo, displaying their vigor in Olympic games. The same might be said, in some respects, of certain anchorites, if the motives of their austerity were not out of the sphere of human morality. But, in the eyes of the world and of superficial men, these indolent exercises of an internal power, and these aimless sacrifices, appear wonderful, and are estimated, not from their real merit, but from the surprise they excite; being praised, not as good things in themselves, but as extraordinary things; and they are praised the more readily, because there is nothing in them offensive to others, and all that is extraordinary in them is purchased entirely at the expense of its author. We here recognise the prejudice, which makes us confound law with force, and gives force the power of deluding the imagination of men; for, in the internal government of the soul, we evidently mistake what is merely the blind action of a force, for the rational employment of the authority over himself, which has been imparted to man.

If we wish to perceive, by a manifest proof, that the merit of sacrifices, of courage, and even of patience, is necessarily relative, we must observe whether the wicked themselves are not capable of braving danger and supporting pain without trembling; and whether all the passions have not their appropriate sacrifices. What should we say of a man, who mutilated one of his limbs, and sacrificed his life, for the sole purpose of exercising the power he has over himself; or of him, who should throw his patrimony into the sea, to enjoy his own disinterestedness?

No ;—man is not destined thus to become his own sport ; to fill in his own presence the deplorable office, which the gladiators filled before the Roman people, by diverting himself with a useless and bloody struggle. There are certain privations, which, without having an actual and immediate advantage, may serve as a preparatory exercise, to teach us to endure, with less suffering, those which will one day come unexpectedly ; and, it is a foresight of prudence, as well as the counsel of virtue, to keep up, by this kind of exercise, the moral energy, which will sooner or later experience so many rough trials. But here ends the real merit of voluntary sacrifice, and, as soon as it passes these limits, becoming useless, it may, at the same time, become fatal. Indeed there are exertions which exhaust, as well as some which strengthen. We have not such an abundance of moral energy as to be permitted to lavish it unnecessarily. That which we spend in superfluous efforts, we shall want for really profitable actions. After getting fatigued during peace, we shall find ourselves unable to fight in the presence of the enemy. Do we not see men, who have carried austerity to the last excess, more incapable of restraining themselves on difficult occasions, and more implacable in anger and revenge, than others ? And if their lips touch by chance the cup of pleasure, do they not grow intoxicated with a single draught ?

☞ Far from following the ways of virtue, it is wandering from them inevitably, to go out of nature's path ; for it is baffling the designs of Providence. Nature calls for no fruitless efforts, and no destruction, which does not conduce to a reproduction. Good actions, like fine thoughts, must come forth, as it were, spontaneously : they are produced less easily under habits of constraint. In a prolonged torture, virtue loses something of that simplicity, confidence, and serenity, which render the practice of excellence easy and delightful. It seems to belie its promises, and become an enemy to itself. Thus a mind

constantly occupied with interrogating, analysing and regulating itself, ends by losing ease and fruitfulness.

The soul must be free, that it may take its moral flight, and that virtue may be what it ought to be, great, active, and generous. There is a naturalness in the productions of the soul, as in those of the intellect, which preserves their freshness, life and grace, and which is lost in the too prolonged watching and criticising of one's self. True virtue is spontaneous and ingenious. When desiring to be made up of artificial merits, we corrupt the gifts we have received, which it would have been better to improve.

The power, which is given to man over himself, is, in reality, a real protection, like all lawful authority. It ought then to be benevolent, and mild, and sometimes even indulgent. Certainly, the moral man must not be his own idol; but it is not requisite that he should therefore be his own enemy; and he is not allowed to be his own tyrant. All caprice, vexation and violence towards himself are forbidden. They would be truly unjust; for he receives his own happiness as a deposit; he is charged to preserve it with care; he answers for it to his Creator; and a blind and aimless austerity not only baffles this beneficent intention, by depriving its victim of a portion of happiness; it introduces into man's internal communion with himself, something inexpressibly sad, unquiet, and gloomy. It becomes a troublesome and vexations guest within his bosom. He regards himself with a fearful, ferocious eye, threatening and fearing himself perpetually; flying from and pursuing himself without relaxation.

It is especially in the exercise of self-control, that we are more particularly exposed to let the inward satisfaction of having done well be corrupted by a secret mixture of vanity. In the use of this power, as of every other, there is something which flatters and seduces us. We boast of having been able to execute a difficult thing; we enjoy being strong; we are secretly exalted with our own triumph, and think we delight in

the accomplishment of duty. And we give ourselves up securely to these dangerous pleasures. The Stoics were not exempt, perhaps, from this secret pride; it appears more than once in their language, and in the heroism which they affected. But when we observe closely these martyrs of excellence, we find they are mere wrestlers, who contend for the meed of opinion. Proud of the victory, which they obtain every day, they can ill help feeling contempt for those who have not the same courage. They cease to be indulgent, and thus lightly esteem the efforts attempted, and the obstacles met with, by those who have not performed such difficult things.

When we impose endless sacrifices upon ourselves at pleasure, we are easily inclined not to feel the value of those, which other men make, and of which, perhaps, we are the occasion. Accustomed to abuse the power we have over ourselves, we become imperious and exacting towards others. At length we become less accessible to the emotions of pity, habituated as we are to have no pity upon ourselves.

Deprived of inward repose, we involuntarily disturb those around us. In this state of restraint to which we condemn ourselves, we cannot feel that self-forgetfulness which constitutes the charm of social intercourse. The sweet relations of friendship and domestic life are all affected by the internal uneasiness we feel. The heart isolates and shuts itself up involuntarily. Besides, the excess of austerity rarely fails to render us unmerciful. But of all the abuses of self-government, let us especially guard against this, which may so lead us astray as to make us sacrifice innocent affections. Such a sacrifice would be odious to virtue and injurious to it; for it would deprive it of one of its most powerful auxiliaries. There are guilty as well as useless sacrifices; and such are those which would war against the faculties of our mind and heart. These gifts have been put in our keeping, and their cultivation and perfection are also among our first duties. But we do not at first perceive, and experience alone discovers to us, that every wrong use of power

over self, even when it seems to be only made up of indifferent sacrifices, may, by being prolonged, indirectly dry up the source of our faculties, weakening our sensibilities, and even our reason. It may also, on other occasions, destroy the natural equilibrium of our moral and intellectual powers. These excesses have often excited the imagination to the most impetuous flights, and favored all its illusions and wanderings. They have roused ardent passions, the transports of which an exalted imagination increases. It might be said, that the powers, placed in man by nature, not being able to follow their course, when thus tyrannically opposed, seek to come to light in some unexpected way, with a violence equal to the constraint which they have undergone; and yet, by means of this very self-imposed austerity, men are more easily deluded about the errors which they suffer to lead them astray: they cannot believe that they would endure such a servitude, when, in another respect, they exercise such tyranny over themselves. They resemble those despots, who, while oppressing others at the instigation of their caprices, secretly obey some favorite.

But of all the disadvantages to which the abuse of self-government gives rise, is not that the most deplorable, which causes doubts about virtue itself, and inspires aversion to it, making it misunderstood? It is a slight thing to deprive ourselves of the enjoyment of the peace, which should reward the practice of excellence; for in this, we only suffer a personal injury: but to discredit in the world, that holy cause, against which are already raised so many prejudices and obstacles; to drive back from the paths of improvement so many weak beings, who are already terrified at the contemplation of the sacrifices strictly necessary; to offer virtue to man, with a savage and gloomy countenance; to expose it to be confounded with sterility of heart or harshness of will; to conceal from view the rewards it promises; to separate it from happiness; these are almost crimes—for they are an immense injury to the human race.

Let us then cease to extol the singularities of that false hero-

ism, which brings forth prodigies, fruitless in real excellence. Let us rather leave them, buried in the obscurity of the solitude in which they so justly delighted. They are not the instructions which men want. Show them examples, which they can follow and love to imitate.


SECTION III.

THE HARMONY BETWEEN THE LOVE OF EXCELLENCE AND SELF-GOVERNMENT.

CHAPTER I.

CONSISTENT CHARACTERS.

THE love of excellence and self-government are each, separately, a principle of harmony. The former produces harmony in the sentiments, the latter in the actions; one gives unity to motives, the other brings the faculties under a controlling guidance. But a new harmony results from the union of these two great powers, without which the love of excellence is but a vain speculation, and self-control a blind force, and the same disorder would arise within us, which would be manifested in society, if the laws had no ministers to bring about their execution, or if the agents of power were not subjected to the directions of law. When in alliance, the love of excellence becomes practical action, and self-control is animated with a holy inspiration; a result resembling the union of theory and practice in the arts. Unfortunately a great number of men have not sufficient strength to do justice to their motives, or not enough motives for their strength. Intentions remain fruitless, and strength




is wasted ; the latter being often converted into poison, and good intentions, by going astray, committing the more ravages.

Consistent characters are those, in which harmony reigns. Perhaps those of this rank are more frequent than we think, especially in the middling and obscure conditions. Irregularities strike the eye more than what is in order. The superficial observer only remarks eminences ; but by the side of each projection, there are cavities, and it is often by our inequalities that we are distinguished.

But we may not apply to morality the false ideas, which we imbibe concerning the value of worldly things. Accustomed to estimate objects by their rarity and their extraordinariness, and by the exertions they have cost, rather than by their real merit, we sometimes pass a like judgment upon characters. Yet a consistent character, although accompanying ordinary faculties, is much nearer perfection, than an inconsistent one, united with the most brilliant qualities. This proposition may shock our prejudices, but it is proved by true philosophy. It doubtless ought to be well understood, that by the mediocrity of the faculties, we mean here only that, which relates to their natural limits ; not that, which would be the fault of our own negligence in cultivating them. Besides, do we not sometimes mistake, and give the name of mediocrity to what is only modest ? The beauty of the moral edifice not only consists in the grandeur of the dimensions, but also and especially in the wisdom of the proportions. In a consistent character, everything conspires at once to the same end ; all the qualities aid and sustain each other ; no one baffles the desire and destination of nature. It is like a piece of mechanism whose machinery is exactly adjusted, in which no movement is lost, and the friction is imperceptible. Persons of this character attain happiness most easily. They will enjoy without celebrating, and even without defining their enjoyment, just as we breathe a free, sweet, and pure air. They alone are secure. With them everything is in its place, and each action answers to its end. And what is happiness,

but this secret sense of a general and constant internal harmony? We say, internal; for, if all within harmonizes, we shall be at peace with what is without; since nothing external can affect us immediately, and outward things acting upon us only through the influence we grant them. Consistent characters are those, which in social intercourse are easy, sure and gentle: we do not clash with them, and they are never wanting, nor contradictory to themselves; their stability excites confidence; their frankness induces self-surrendering openness; we feel at ease with them; we are not offended with their superiority; doubtless we admire them less, but we also hardly dream of feeling envious of them; and they seem almost to disarm malignity, by the peaceful influence of their presence.

If the ways of perfection seem so arduous, it is because we seek them in a different direction than that marked out by Providence. If we knew how to be consistent, many things which appear difficult would become easy, and many things which seem bitter would be sweet. Consistent characters are to morality what great minds are with respect to science. We often see men, who aspire to success in study, yet blindly prejudiced against all general views; and, not content with limiting themselves, they keep aloof and confined to notions which are quite peculiar. They aspire to become entirely *peculiar men*, in order to borrow the denomination, which they themselves sometimes give to the kind of merit they are ambitious to acquire. This direction of the mind may have had its advantages in the infancy of human knowledge and industry; it was necessary, then, to divide, in order to begin rightly; this was the use of corporations and wardenships in trades: and peculiar minds greatly resemble the ingenious workmen, formed by the management of the wardenships. But, in proportion as the human mind advances, the reciprocal relations of different kinds of knowledge are brought to light; the arts discover the assistance which they lend to one another, and henceforth skill consists in following them out in their various relations to each other.



All great discoveries are placed at the points of coincidence between the different series of ideas or observations. Great minds always seize upon analogies, and discover similitude in diversity. Genius dwells on the points where all the rays meet. Peculiar men always become small, if any circumstance displaces them, even if it is to elevate them. Look, for example, at geometricians, when they are brought to judge of moral science; and lawyers, discoursing of administration and politics. But this, which we observe in the progress of the intellect, is much more applicable to moral progress; here men are not divided and subdivided into professions and casts; their vocation is common; it is complete for each one: the wide paths, which are suitable for the intellect in the highest periods of its development, are those, into which the soul ought to enter at the commencement of its moral existence. Virtue fills here the functions which genius does in science; it ought to take possession of those qualities of the character which are central, because these exert a general influence over all the habits.

Oddity and singularity are signs of an incomplete character; the elements of which are not in harmony either with themselves or with the conditions in which the individual finds himself placed. Originality can very well be united with a consistent character, since it consists in drawing from ourselves the motives of our conduct and the elements of our opinions; but it degenerates into oddity, if we do not sustain the character we have taken, or if, pretending to govern ourselves, we are governed, not by reason, but by caprice. Our characteristics are generally our faults; and it is because we do not know how to convert our characteristics into virtues, as we ought to do. We let them follow the course which they have received from the natural disposition, without submitting them to a rational cultivation, or assigning them their rules and limits; boasting of the excellence of the principle in itself, and easily excusing its going astray. The qualities, of which we should be

proud, are those which we owe less to nature than to our own efforts.

Great passions always take something from our most estimable qualities; exaggerating and corrupting, in order to use them; and we become more violent and inflexible by this means, as well as more vain. It is for want of knowing how to govern ourselves, how to direct the cultivation of our faculties to the common end, which is assigned them by the highest law, that we neglect to preserve that just equilibrium between the different qualities, which would retain each in its sphere; and everything is abandoned to itself. Thus, some are exalted and wasted, and others remain in a lethargic state; and we find ourselves filled with rebel powers, when we come to take the management of our minds into our own hands. Many men seem false, because they deceive us and disappoint our expectations; and yet they are only inconsistent and unfaithful to themselves; they are, as it were, divided in halves; half given up to self-interest, and half to self-sacrifice, and they obey each by turns.

Characters are rendered inconsistent by an internal and hidden limit, which arrests the energy of the will and the course of the sentiments; so that we cannot finish what we have undertaken, nor hold to what we have promised. If we observe narrowly, we shall find that this limit is generally an obstacle secretly raised by self-interest. How can this limit be made to disappear? Must we not give unity to the character, and then establish a general principle of conduct, and obtain power to be faithful to it? Now this is exactly what is given by the union of the love of excellence with self-government. A sincere and profound attachment to virtue banishes all discord from life. Virtue has of itself a character of generality and constancy: the better it is felt and understood, the more evident is this character. It forms an entire and unbroken system, which embraces all the affections of the soul and all the resolutions of life. It admits of no distinction or divi-

sion in the application of its fundamental truths. Morality is *one* in its spirit, although varied in its application : all duties are brethren, although they are arranged in different ranks. A partial and restricted virtue is not founded upon true principles. The farther we go back to the origin of the notions of excellence, the more clearly we shall perceive the close consanguinity, which exists between them ; the better we shall know how to govern ourselves ; and the more we shall experience the aid, which duties lend each other. A life inspired by the love of excellence and regulated by reason, is like a beautiful poem, in which everything conspires to the principal unity, and in which the details harmonizing with each other, are distributed in a just gradation. It resembles a grand geometrical demonstration, in which the corollaries flow from one another, and are all derived from the same fundamental theorem. In such characters all discords disappear, because chance does not influence the principle of action.

Three principal harmonies result from a just agreement between the moral powers, Love of Excellence, and Self-government : *greatness of soul, dignity of character, and internal peace.* The first is brought out in actions ; the second also appears externally ; but the last reigns in the depth of our hearts. Let us try to find how they each result from this twofold principle.

CHAPTER II.

GREATNESS OF SOUL.

THERE is something so admirable in greatness of soul, that it cannot be contemplated without deep emotion. It excites an ardent emulation within us ; it reveals to us something about

the faculties of our nature, which we had not perhaps suspected, but which we recognise to be a gift of the human race. We feel a just pride in belonging to that common country, where such noble characters are produced; and, in the joy of this discovery, we almost feel confident that we are capable of imitating them. Greatness of soul unites in itself the two noblest traits which belong to the character of man; it borrows from love of excellence all that is generous, and from self-government all that is energetic. It points out the end to which our nature arrives; shows us the whole extent of our liberty; and thus teaches us of what we should be capable, if we dared.

We can define this noble phenomenon, which diffuses so pure a light over the earth, only so far as we have clearly considered and determined upon the two moral powers whose effects we are here considering, the twofold influence of, which greatness of soul unites in itself in a very high degree, and in perfect harmony.

Certain passions, by developing extraordinary powers in the soul, may render us capable of executing great things; but in the results, which follow, how gigantic soever they may be, we shall never find the impress of greatness of soul. We shall always discover something narrow in the outlines, exaggerated in the execution, or servile in the impulse.

We shall find in them a secret mixture of personal interest, and we shall perceive a certain extravagance. They are a kind of unnatural and brief crisis. Yet we may remark, that the passions which produce great things, are those only which are cherished by some erring affection or moral power. Never could sensuality, left to itself, or selfishness in its naked sterility, even in their most violent excesses, succeed in imitating anything great.

Powerful effects are not enough to characterize great actions; for a machine can produce great effects. Great actions are those which produce their effects by the energy of generous sentiments.

We may habitually cherish noble sentiments and lofty thoughts, and yet not attain greatness of soul. It not only demands, that such sentiments be put in action, but that there be some boldness, and a certain degree of courage, in the action which gives them impulse. It supposes an insight into the future ; it must have a free field ; it needs space ; it desires danger. What immediately touches us is too confined ; the present is too transient, and what is evident and positive leaves too little merit to the determinations of the will.

In magnanimity you will always find the impulse and self-surrender of confidence ; it is faith in others ; it is especially faith in virtue. We would defy a skeptic to give himself up to an impulse of magnanimity, if his skepticism extended to morality.

Greatness of soul supposes a certain elevation in the mind, and the habit of a frequent and easy intercourse with general views, which are alone extensive. Habits of analysis, if they are too exclusive and too prolonged, subtlety of mind, refinement and delicacy of perception, may destroy the noblest sentiments by taking from them the prospects by which they need to be supported. A very ordinary mind often betrays a generous heart ; but, in order to aspire to what is majestic, we must first conceive of majesty.

Greatness of soul cannot be satisfied with an individual and very exclusive sentiment, in which it can find no support, and meets too many limits.

This is doubtless the cause of the phenomenon, that men who possess it, are generally less accessible to the passion of love ; while the passion of glory attracts them powerfully, and would even become a stumbling-block, if greatness of soul did not remain true to its principle. For it finds in glory a magnificent concert, echoing the secret sentiments with which it is inspired, perpetuating the expression of them, and extending them on all sides. This love of glory is a happy and useful instinct of great souls. By aspiring to great and brilliant actions, they naturally come before our eyes, to enlighten and allure us by their ex-

ample, to instruct our age and posterity. Let there be glory then to those, whom magnanimity inspires ! let it surround them like a luminous halo, that they may console and spread joy through the world by their examples ! Let them come forth as the acknowledged flower of mankind, adorned with the richest coloring ! Let them be considered as the ornaments of society ! Let them appear like so many beacons, destined to awaken in all hearts, the virtuous affections ; and to give encouragement by inspiring high and lawful hopes !

Greatness of soul is promoted by respect, admiration, and a holy and pure enthusiasm, for it looks upward, towards what is essentially excellent. It is the peculiarity of great souls to delight in homage paid to noble actions. Far from being accessible to envy, they feel a secret and deep joy in seeing what is honorable honored. They promote, and call on all sides for the homage which is its due, and are, as it were, intoxicated with the triumph of virtue. He who does not feel the sentiment of respect, has no idea of truly elevated things ; and he who is incapable of admiring what is great, is incapable of producing it. True enthusiasm is a mixture of admiration and love, directed to what is good and beautiful : it is an active all-conquering sentiment. In the arts it personifies ; in morality it does more, it realizes. There are some minds so blinded by vanity as to pretend to find a proof of their superiority in their inability to admire. There are some men, who affect to disapprove of an enthusiasm they know nothing of ; thus transforming their impotence into wisdom. Narrow souls give themselves credit for enthusiasm when they are merely astonished ; and ardent imaginations think they have enthusiasm, when they are affected by external brilliancy. Let us beware of a critical spirit, and beware also of an immoderate thirst for success. The former will destroy, and the latter will mislead the generating principle of magnanimity.

The great in soul always have an eminently natural character ; they appear to perform great actions with facility, at least

their efforts are unrestrained and easy ; and, that which is extraordinary to ordinary minds, is common and familiar to them. This is because the principles and germs of magnanimity are in our nature. They are stifled there, only when we paralyse them ourselves ; they burst forth when the bonds of personal interest are loosened. Besides, everything is true in the views magnanimity inspires, as well as in the affections which promote it. It appreciates the intrinsic value of things : it is filled and penetrated with the love of what is good. The consciousness which it possesses gives it a just security, and an ease and calmness which impart something firm, free, and finished to the action performed.

In order that greatness of soul may be exercised, it is doubtless necessary that circumstances offer it worthy occasions ; and these occasions are rare. An opportunity for it to act is a privilege mostly reserved to the superior conditions in society, which fortune or power have surrounded with their favors : it is a privilege, however, whose value is too little felt. But there are other scenes, which, though concealed from spectators, are not less fit for the exercise of this great power. The presence of the spectator does not create, but manifests what is great. Yet there are many people, who cannot learn what is great but by the mouths of others, and seem unable to understand it directly.

But, if magnanimity can only exercise itself at times, still it must be an habitual and constant disposition of the soul. It cannot come by a stroke of will, and at the needful moment only. It must preexist, impatient to act, although it may not understand itself clearly. In the presence of occasion or example, it comes forth spontaneously ; it escapes, free and full of joy, like genius, suddenly revealed in the presence of a masterpiece. It is in virtue what genius is in the arts.

It is so true that a free and entire self-forgetfulness is one of the essential and characteristic traits of greatness of soul, that the vulgar are generally inclined to suppose it exists,

wherever this self-forgetfulness is shown in a brilliant manner. This is the reason why it is especially recognised in pardon granted to an enemy, in indifference to injuries, and in disdain for the favors of fortune. Also, the two simplest forms of personal feeling, covetousness and vanity, are more incompatible with it than anything in the world. Self, ruling and bringing everything to itself, and confessing to itself its exclusive pretensions, is something so mean, so puerile ! Self-forgetfulness, however, is only one of the conditions of greatness of soul ; how perfect soever it may be, it is not enough to constitute it. An absolute indifference for one's self would not be elevated, even if it were possible. Self-forgetfulness must be a real sacrifice, though it may be accompanied with joy ; it must be made for worthy objects ; in a word, self-love must be absorbed and conquered by a purer love.

The great in soul have an intimate communion with each other, and a language peculiar to themselves. This language is sometimes hard to be understood by the vulgar ; and certain men, who are not called vulgar, yet do not really understand it, and therefore think that they have a right to dispute its sense and value.

The great in soul sometimes neglect little things. It is quite necessary that they should let the spirit of criticism and envy have this consolation.

There is a sublimity in characters as well as in the productions of the mind. It results from two principles, which, elevated to the last degree, constitutes greatness of soul. It consists in sacrifice, entire sacrifice, to the voice of excellence, whenever the voice of excellence really requires a sacrifice so absolute. This, which makes common souls tremble with horror and affright, is embraced with so pure and true a joy by the great that it seems as if it were to them a reward, rather than a sacrifice. It is less for them a burthen to be borne, than a crown to be seized.

Sacrifice does not always consist in giving one's life ; there

are some men, who give their lives foolishly. In some circumstances there is more greatness of soul in awaiting death, than there would be in going to meet it; there is sometimes more greatness in consenting to live, and especially in being resigned to survive, than in braving or suffering death. There is a sacrifice, which comprises every moment and the whole of existence, which implies the renouncement of all our habits and inclinations, the sacrifice of our fortune, our plan of life and dearest affections; this is voluntary exile. Also, there are occasions, upon which we are called to brave opinion, the prejudices of our country and our age. The martyr of truth and virtue has more than once been touched by apparent ignominy; he has had to endure the judgment pronounced by vice and absurdity, and applauded by the vulgar. Let worldly heroes be silent and bow before such heroism. The former receive the applause of the world and its glory; but the latter only its injustice and the suffrage of conscience.

The sublime in mental productions is always relative; it requires a concurrence of favorable circumstances, preparation which prevents surprise, art which collects and concentrates in a single and rapid stroke. The sublime in character is absolute, independent, and permanent; it draws everything from its own nature; it has no need of the aid of art; it is not weakened by multiplying itself, and loses nothing by being explained.

The great in soul are not great because they are separated from the generality of men; and if we should all attain to this eminent dignity, it would lose none of its value. What elevates the soul to greatness, is loftiness of purpose, and the generosity of the effort necessary to attain our end.

CHAPTER III.

DIGNITY OF CHARACTER.

MAN, a creature of God, bears upon his brow, and still more in the depth of his heart, the stamp of his origin. A candidate for a future existence, he carries within, the sign of this high calling; and, a citizen of the universe, he exercises in it a sort of magistracy and even priesthood. There is a bond of communication between the material and moral world, and becoming acquainted with the first through science, and governing it by industry, he enters into the second by means of religion, virtue, and free will.

What is dignity of character, but this very dignity of our natures, understood, cherished, and called forth in our lives? In what does it consist, but in sustaining, by our sentiments and actions, the rank which Providence has assigned us? The great in soul should keep guard over this common dignity of mankind. It is a certain sign of a degraded and depraved character, to feel a secret desire to lower this dignity; indications of which we sometimes perceive among those, who, perhaps, are at the same time vain, but certainly are very blind in their vanity.

But this original nobleness is maintained and justified by all which we know of moral progress. And it is by becoming better, that we find out its titles. And, also, in its turn, the sense of this dignity helps us to become better. This, for example, is manifested by certain public solemnities, dramatic representations, the sight of rewards decreed to real merit, in the influence they exert over those who share in and are witnesses of them. The emotions which such spectacles cause, by awakening in all hearts a deep sense of the primitive nobleness of hu-

man nature, inspires in each a secret desire to prove them in himself, and seem, also, to make him confident that he shall not fail. Under this happy influence, what is excellent will appear natural, easy and simple.

We continue, therefore, to observe the results, which spring from harmony between the two great powers, which lead man in moral progress. It is through self-control, united to the love of the excellent, that we obtain greatness of soul without pride, and modesty without meanness. Dignity of character in man is the token of his initiation into wisdom, and the seal of his consecration to excellence.

Dignity of character is the natural attitude of virtue.—There is nothing even in worldly notions, noble and distinguished, which does not suppose some degree of disinterestedness, as an essential condition. No bargain whatever, no equal exchange between contractors, will ever receive this appellation: while forgetfulness of our own rights is ever a noble thing, and all we do for the advantage of others, has dignity. There is meanness in all sordid motives, and what was good in itself, ceases to be honorable, as soon as it is sought with a mercenary design. There may be some dignity in making good our rights, but it is only when we meet some obstacle or danger in defending them; or, when we claim them less on account of a personal feeling, than in the name of justice, thus including the rights of all in the same cause.

There is a natural dignity in purity of sentiments and actions, as there is always something mean in what is inspired, merely by the allurements of sensual and present pleasure. Innocence enhances what it adorns: its dignity is the most lawful of all dignity; for it preserves untouched the deposit confided to the free-will of man: modesty also is a respect for one's self, which commands that of others.

There is a natural dignity in what is true. Hence, sincerity and frankness are honorable. Dissimulation and falsehood may be profitable; they may be combined with skill; but they

are always base. This is not only because all artifice is a sign of weakness, it is also because artifice relinquishes one of the titles, which constitute the excellence of our nature. Besides, we are seldom false but from a calculation of selfishness.

There is a natural dignity in everything which expresses the accomplishment of a duty. That, which surrounds magistracy and paternity, is not only derived from the authority which is confided to them, but also from the importance of the duties imposed upon them, and which we are to suppose fulfilled; besides, this authority, in one respect, is really a great duty. Every profession, also, is honorable, because of the obligations it imposes upon those who hold it.

All abandonment of self-control, degrades us; drunkenness, for example,—which is the last degree of it. Analyse what renders a thing ignoble, and you will always discover a principle of shameful and extreme negligence. The familiarity which takes from dignity of character and manners, is not that which wears the condescension of kindness, and the simplicity of modesty, in our intercourse with inferiors: it is that which supposes a want of circumspection and self-vigilance.

Dignity of character involves a certain degree of severity in the habits of life, reserve in relations, sobriety in language, collectedness, gravity, and seriousness in manners. All these things show, that we know how to govern ourselves, and that we are animated with the love of the good and true. This is the attitude of a man, who lives in the presence of those lofty destinies, which Providence has assigned us beyond the confines of earth and the present life.

Old age owes a portion of its dignity to the authority which experience gives; and misfortune, to the protection with which Providence surrounds it, by recommending it to the generous. But old age and misfortune have still another kind of dignity, which the former receives from the proximity of a great future, where are resolved the moral destinies of man; and the latter, from what is placed in the very midst of trial, which explains

and prepares us for that destiny. Besides, in the aged man we see one who has long struggled ; and in the man touched by adversity, one who is at the moment struggling. Both are consecrated by the exertion of strength of soul.

A character loses its dignity as soon as it finds itself deceiving expectation ; contradicting and belying itself. Ridicule springs up wherever there is failure.

Agitation and inquietude injure dignity of character, because they are a sign of weakness. We sometimes think we shall acquire dignity by showing ourselves powerful and strong ; but we are mistaken ; we must first, and at the same time be good. In true dignity of character there is not only something imposing, but something also which inspires confidence. The beholder feels, that in the habitual decisions of such a character, nothing is the fruit of personal interest, and consequently nothing can become hostile to him. In the man, who would only be strong, he might fear an oppressor, but in the strong and good man, he may hope for a protector. He sees the light of justice and truth shine in such a character, which will serve as a guide to him ; he finds the maxims established by reason, personified, and therefore follows them without repugnance, for it is not the individual he follows, but the light of wisdom. The good man, in whose soul virtue is deep rooted, and who is consistent, exercises a natural, imperceptible and mild magistracy upon the earth. We respect him without his commanding it, and obey him unconsciously ; in his presence animosities are softened, ambitious desires are calmed or shamed, the wicked turn pale, the weak are encouraged, and frivolous men are first astonished and then begin to reflect. The power he exercises over others is the more real, because he does not seek to exercise it. He does not intrude on us ; but we go to him. We speak of him little ; but we involuntarily draw near to him ; we lean upon him ; we consult him in silence ; we feel ourselves better for contemplating and honoring him ; we seek his esteem, and become more estimable for it. This dignity is the work of

him who is clothed with it, and belongs to him exclusively. But we often seek to obtain the like advantages at less expense; we are eager to serve, in external circumstances, all which may bring us the means of an apparent elevation. In that natural and confused instinct, which leads us to exalt and aggrandize ourselves, we do not distinguish the indication of that sacred vocation, which calls us to perfection: we take splendor for dignity, extravagance for power, the shadow or reflection for the reality. Personal interest, disguised in different ways, corrupts the source of legitimate dignity. It attempts to invoke true merit, but only for the purpose of placing merit in its train, and of enjoying the homage which is its due. Thus arise pride, vanity, and self-love, as so many different ways of turning either the homage of other men or our own approbation to the profit of personal interest.

Pride glories in what it possesses, and in everything which has the character of power. It cares little for the moral character of this power, the nature of its effects, provided it be a force. It even dares to glory in excellence, but as a serviceable influence; for it is in itself that it delights, and chooses to delight exclusively. It is calm and meditative, because it lives and is sufficient for its own contemplation. It is fearless and frank, because it thinks itself supported upon true zeal and just foundations; it has faith in itself, because it is imperious, intolerant and exclusive. It is nothing else than confident domineering personal feeling, satisfied with the conviction it has of its own superiority.—Vanity seeks rather to find in the consideration of other men, what it does not succeed in finding in itself; it wants attention, and desires admiration, or rather astonishment. For it does not care that this admiration should be cherished by esteem; it is satisfied with having spectators, and with captivating them. It is taken up with *appearing*, not with *being*; it even delights in singularity, for singularity astonishes and makes a show; it displays itself outwardly; it wishes to be seen; it will even draw advantage from its faults, errors, and excesses,

if it can surround them with any brilliancy ; it fears censure less than to be forgotten. By endeavouring to persuade others of its merits, it concludes by persuading itself of them. Vanity is personal feeling, seeking an external mirror, in which it may contemplate its idol ; but with the hope of finding it of more vast dimensions, and brilliant with more intense refulgence.

Self-love, (taking this term in the restricted sense which we gave it some time since,) self-love is more subtle, more delicate, more refined in its purpose, more ingenious in its means, and less ingenuous in its expressions and acknowledgements. It is not satisfied with being seen, it wishes to be favorably judged ; it aspires to success more than to renown ; it fears disapprobation, but ridicule more. It had rather please than shine. It wishes for consideration, esteem, and even good will. It even seeks its nourishment in the friendly intercourse of friendship, and penetrates into the most secret and intimate relations. It winds and penetrates within, and even torments the soul in its relations with itself ; it reproaches it for imperfections, which are rather a limit of nature than a real fault ; it is more afflicted by the absence of qualities than of virtues ; it especially suffers for the want of talent and skill. This is exacting, susceptible, and restless personal feeling.

We see men, who are full of pride, who seem exempt from vanity : they have such a consciousness of what they are, that they hardly care for the opinion we have of them ; and they have so much disdain for other men, that this opinion has little value in their eyes. We see some men free from pride and vanity, and yet governed by self-love. Less reprehensible than if they were proud and vain, they are, however, more unfortunate. They are insensible to the advantages of fortune and honors ; but they are affected by the least thing which touches upon their character in the world's opinion. They are alarmed at everything, and are always ready to admit interpretations which are unfavorable to themselves. They are in a continual state of observation and defence, rather than tormented by

the desires of conquest. Self-love is like an insect, which may attach itself to the most beautiful plants, and wither them. When discontented with ourselves, it contributes to our discontent much more than we suspect ; for self-love has a wonderful art of being disguised in virtue. It might be said that pride gives to itself a sort of dignity, that vanity borrows it, and that self-love steals it ; but all three are wanting in true dignity, because they seek it where it cannot be found. There is grandeur, and an imposing grandeur, in the numerous and public testimonies, which society renders to merit, virtue and talent. It is a noble thing to see homage sincerely rendered to the excellent upon earth ; it honors humanity, and improves it, in that it awakes in all hearts the purest of sympathies, and through this sympathy gives a new impulse to generous sentiments. Next to religious solemnities, it is the most magnificent festival which can be celebrated upon the earth ; and most nations have associated the honors rendered to the memory of great men, with religious solemnities. There is certainly elevation and nobleness in the ambition which aspires to gain such laurels, and we cannot disparage an order of motives, which produces such great things. Who would wish to deprive society of the illustrious, or to disenchant human nature of the love of glory ? But this great testimony is only acquired by him who deserves it, and not by him upon whom it might have fallen by chance or mistake : it is not the person who is praised, but the attribute which he is supposed to possess. It is only acquired by the man, who is inspired with worthy motives ; it is not the external action merely, that is applauded, but its principle. The acclamation of the crowd is but a vain noise and senseless tumult, if there be not approbation in it, or if it be not just in itself. Let us therefore clearly understand the pure love of glory, with the conditions it supposes. It has a language which explains, and a sign which represents it. It is an authentic, solemn, brilliant and perpetual confirmation of internal approbation ; such as might have been deserved, however, in silence. Let us seek

true celebrity by means of what is worthy of being celebrated. Let us feel indifferent whether we receive this tribute of praises. Perhaps then we shall strive for it less ardently, and become still more worthy. Let the love of glory, in the scale of moral progress, be the presentiment of a rank much superior to glory. Let it be a light to reveal to us, and to make us esteem what is worthy of homage. Let it be a noble instinct, which may lead us to seek especially the approbation of our own conscience.

There is a lawful *pride*, which consists in making the character of man and the dignity of our nature respected in ourselves: as members of society, it is more than each one's right, it is a duty, not to suffer, that it should be outraged in our persons. We perceive how much this pride differs from arrogance; for there is nothing personal in it, nothing which centres upon the individual. There is also a just *pride* of virtue, which resists injustice and calumny, which rests upon the inward consciousness of pure intentions, feels its superiority over the power by which it is oppressed; which triumphs in the midst of trials, and takes pleasure in its obscurity; which consists in being able to come forth fearlessly and without disguise, and looks disdainfully upon gross interest; which is the companion of truth and liberty, and procures the satisfaction of feeling that we have been able to govern ourselves. Certainly, it is becoming to virtue, and is necessary to it, in the presence of the vain pomps which follow in the train of arrogance and frivolity; but it is a modest, serene, indulgent and gentle pride.

Modesty adorns virtue, as bashfulness ornaments beauty; it harmonizes with just pride, as moderation harmonizes with justice. It heightens dignity of character as simplicity enhances greatness; it adds to merit the same charms which candor adds to goodness of heart. What is modesty? Is it not a sense of excellence so deep and true, that the observance of duty appears a natural thing? Is it not so sincere a desire for

what is excellent, that what is wanting is much more perceptible, than what is already obtained? Is it not so pure a love for what is good, that it even forgets the reward reserved for merit in the approbation of others?

CHAPTER IV.

INWARD PEACE.

'NATURE,' says the disciple of Aristotle, 'abhors a vacuum.' We may well say so of the human heart. Most men, in a blind desire of agitation, form only a negative idea of the peace of the heart. They fear it as a state of privation, and, under pretext of avoiding ennui, seek trouble. Would they but once try to experience peace, how much more just would be the idea conceived of it. They would perceive that it is not silence but harmony; not inaction, but equilibrium; not sleep, but serenity; not annihilation, but health of soul. It is a calmness full of life, tempering all suffering, redoubling the value of all enjoyments, and reanimating all our strength.

The tranquillity of soul of the sages of antiquity, answers but imperfectly to what we intend by inward peace. Tranquillity of soul consists essentially in the absence of disquiet and trouble. Inward peace supposes something more; it supposes the presence of a restoring principle. Inward peace is a harmony of the two great moral powers; tranquillity of soul is the fruit of self-government alone. The latter, therefore, fulfilling one of the conditions, which are united in inward peace, prepares for its commencement, being a state of security; but inward peace is a state of satisfaction. The love of excellence diffuses into it all its sweetness. The tranquil soul is a vase, that is destined to contain perfumes; but it is little to possess

the vase, if it is empty. The heart where inward peace reigns is filled with the love of excellence, and the more full it is, the more profound is the peace enjoyed.

Is there not something dry and unfruitful in the tranquillity of soul of the ancient philosophers? It seems to have rested on a fiction, contradicted by observation and experience, and which the moral nature itself rejects. Seneca and Epictetus sometimes sadden, and even terrify us, by the images they give us of this false repose, and sometimes they make us revolt from it, by demanding of us the sacrifice of the sweetest and most sacred affections. But inward peace takes love into its bosom, and becomes a sanctuary for it : it therefore admits all just and honorable feelings. Inward peace results from the faithful accomplishment of the vocation, which has been traced out for us by nature ; it cannot, therefore, require us to contradict the purposes of nature. This peace is not a total exemption from suffering, as there are many legitimate sufferings and solitudes of the heart ; it may harmonize with suffering and solicitude ; for nothing which is lawful and true, takes away from the state of the soul, which is itself a sort of concert formed by justice and truth. We suffer therefore, but we suffer with firmness : suffering is accepted with resignation ; sometimes indeed the peace becomes more exquisite ; for suffering has secret but real relations with our destination. Nothing which belongs to the genuine order of Providence, can disagree with the internal order ; tears may flow, but they are not weakness ; they may be a tribute to nature, and they solace us because they are so. There is in this peace something healing, which soothes secretly and insensibly the wounds of the soul and even the sufferings of the body. The wise man, in this happy state of mind, is moved without agitation, and rests without ennui. He enjoys what falls to his lot, and supports the privations imposed upon him. His sight is obscured by no cloud ; he is fatigued by no murmuring : alarmed by no phantoms, nothing agitates the depths of his heart. He does easily what is prescribed to

him : nothing surprises him, or finds him off his guard, for he walks in the way traced out for him by nature. He enjoys fully the favor of the Creator, recognising a blessing in the trials which are laid upon him, and finding in all things sources of satisfaction, as far as they are necessary to his condition, because he sees himself in the place which was assigned him in the designs of the Supreme Disposer.

In such a state of mind, all the faculties have free and more vigorous spring. Inward peace is, to the faculties of man, like the dewy morning to the plants of the earth. Light is diffused in the intellect : ideas are distinguished from each other, and are easily classed. We interrogate and answer ourselves without constraint ; we penetrate easily into the depths of the soul : we render an account of what we think and feel ; we know better what we wish : our will is more decided and frank. How easy then does virtue appear to us ! how delightful its contemplations ; what recompense is anticipated in its practice ; how pleased we feel with ourselves and others ! Our intercourse with others partakes of the serenity which reigns within, good will becomes natural ; we claim less, we forgive more ; for we have less need of others, and are less vulnerable. Besides, the calmness within ourselves is spread over those around us, as it were, unconsciously. The peaceful man interposes, as a sort of mediator in the midst of hatred and animosities. If, as a beneficent messenger he appears in the midst of a discontented, disquieted, agitated crowd, his presence alone brings confidence and hope, producing similar effects to the chords of the melodies which soothe the storms of passion. So, after the tempest, the mysterious bow appears, which is drawn upon the heavens, but rests upon the earth. Inward peace is the expression of moral order ; as beauty in an edifice proves the regularity of its proportions. It is the emanation of virtue itself, and therefore, when beaming on the brow of the good, it becomes a sort of eloquent language, which penetrates to the depths of the heart. Do we not owe to it, in an

especial manner, the pleasure we take in the contemplation of nature ; and, on the other hand, is it not because the contemplation of nature disposes us to recover inward peace, that it does us so much good ? The image of peace, constantly reproduced in these varied scenes, these graceful pictures, becomes living and sensible ; answering to us, and applauding us, if we are in harmony with ourselves, or bringing us back to this harmony, if we have been unfaithful to it. As nature only smiles upon the good, or those who are sincere in their return to excellence, she only receives innocence or repentance. The beauties of nature are the mirror of a virtuous soul.

Inward peace is a pledge of the constancy and perseverance of resolutions and sentiments ; it is a conservative and tutelary principle. It is only when we are in agitation that we are changeable. The more we taste this peace, the more we are attached to it. Unlike the pleasures of sense and selfishness, this pleasure grows by enjoyment. It is an animated living pleasure, which, far from throwing us into stupor, awakens all the moral energies within us. Under its influence, the soul, feeling itself unshackled, raises itself from the miseries which weigh it down, free, confident and dignified ; gazing with joy upon the prospect of great things, and aspiring to undertake them.

If we ask men, whose examples excite our most just admiration, they will tell us, that it was in moments of peaceful self-collectedness, that they conceived those vast designs and generous resolutions, by which they have done honor to the human race.

Peace of soul beams ingenuously from the brow of those favorites of virtue, who, entirely faithful to the law of excellence, have preserved untouched the deposit of moral virginity. It rests, majestically serene, upon the brow of old age, when it is crowned by the remembrance of the good actions which have filled up the course of a long life. In the former is a calmness, which includes a fruitful activity ; in the latter it is a merited

repose, but a repose full of vigor. It confers upon the first a sweet pure dignity ; it restores to the second a new youth. Perfect peace is one of the attributes with which we love to clothe those superior intelligences, those angelic natures, which seem to us to form an intermediate link between the Divinity and man, and which occupy the highest summits of moral nature.

Whatever shocks our sight in external nature, whatever carries disorder into sensible phenomena, whatever disturbs the state of living organized beings, always arises from some element being displaced, or from irregular movement. It is the same in all internal agitation ; there is some want of regularity, some secret contradiction between our conduct and the tendency marked out for us. If, therefore, we remark, that all the obstacles which prevent inward peace, arise, in some way or other, from some requisition of selfishness, we shall recognise that selfishness is a real and fundamental irregularity in human nature. Under its three principal and most decided forms, avarice, ambition and vanity, it becomes the focus of various solitudes, all irreconcilable with repose of heart. How remarkable ! we are never less at ease with ourselves, than when we are exclusively self-seekers. It is placing ourselves in the service of a master the most severe and the most difficult to satisfy.

There is a melancholy, which may ally itself with peace of soul. It is that which is almost inevitably connected with sensibility, and like sensibility it is placed as the safeguard of virtue. It is approved by virtue, and consented to by reason ; and it is a melancholy not unnatural to those who see human life in a true light. How can they turn away their eyes from so many miseries which afflict humanity ; from so many errors, from so many crimes ? How can they but groan for the evils, which weigh upon those they love ? How can they shut out the never-ceasing groan of suffering humanity ? Must they not every day also deplore their own weakness ? Even the zeal

which inflames them for the holy cause of virtue, is frequently and painfully mistaken. This melancholy, however, has some charms; it is not a principle of agitation; it has nothing gloomy in it; it does not dry up the soul; on the contrary, it has a softening effect. As it is a reasonable sadness, it produces no disorder; and by it we even become better.

There is a melancholy, which essentially influences our imaginations. It is a disposition, which results from temperament, from the state of health, from the dispositions of the organs, from the reactions of those entirely external circumstances upon the ordinary impressions which we receive from objects. This kind of melancholy, which has its momentary and transient crises, may menace peace of heart, unless the reason knows how to defend itself from its attacks; but it is only a trial of patience. As soon as we know its origin and nature, we support it, as we support a purely physical evil.

There are, however, three more serious kinds of melancholy, which attack inward peace in its essential principle. We may refer to these three dispositions almost all the causes which poison human life. They all spring from an ardent desire disappointed in its attempts. The desire of loving, the desire of acting, and the desire of appearing.

The melancholy, which arises from the desire of loving, torments the sensitive and timid, and has the most expansive and tender character. It is perhaps that which is most profoundly painful of all.

Fortunately, it is that, which is most easily remedied. If, wandering in the world unknown, despised and solitary, we cannot obtain a return of those affections, which aspire to expand themselves; if everything remains deaf to our voice, this thirst for love, which we feel within us, can yet, by purifying itself more, find a solace. It can turn everything wholly to the profit of virtue, by receiving its aid; for virtue will teach it how to love without recompense and with entire generosity;

how to fix love upon high objects, that will console us for not being able to meet what it seeks upon earth: Wisdom will also guard it from the aberrations of a blind and irregular sensibility.

The melancholy, which arises from desire of acting, torments those ardent souls, which have a consciousness of their strength, and has something impatient, indefinite, and convulsive, in its approach. It is often ignorant of itself. It struggles against obstacles, but it easily misunderstands the means of triumph. It renders the situation in which a man is placed insupportable to him; and urges him to change it. If it can find the issue which it seeks, it can do great things; but it may consume the faculties in their principle, if it is condemned to turn upon itself. This melancholy has also its remedies. It finds them in favorable circumstances, in a surer resource, in the counsels which wisdom gives to bend to circumstances and reap advantage from them, however unfavorable they may be. It finds these remedies especially in the virtue which sets free from vain ambition, and which always offers useful careers to human activity.

The melancholy, which springs from the desire of appearing, is of all others the most dry, sterile, gloomy and unquiet. It is mere slavery to opinion. The seat of this melancholy is rather in self-love than in the heart; but it spreads over all within. Wounded self-love seeks to interest the heart in its cause. This kind of melancholy leads to nothing useful. It only needs some remedy that may cure it. We must attack it in its principle, in order to be freed from the yoke under which this desire has placed us. As far as it governs, it pursues and disquiets its victim; but opinion upbraids him, even for the efforts he makes to satisfy its claims. There is no peace for those, who are dependent upon it; for there is no security for them. They desire to be seen, and fear to be judged; they thirst for praise, and run the risk of blame; they belie them-

selves to obtain the suffrage of others : there is no asylum for them. They condemn themselves to remain on the stage, and to await the uncertain decrees of the spectators. And, when they obtain this much desired approbation, of what value is it? What satisfaction do they gain from it, unless it has the sanction of conscience? Also, the ardent desire of success, that passion which creates and developes intercourse with the world, is one of the poisons, whose action is most fatal to the heart of man. Those are especially in danger of it, whose condition places them particularly in relation with the public. Impatient to succeed, alarmed at the least sign of disfavor, he whom the desire of success torments, takes umbrage at everything, and especially seeks outward supports. His eye wanders constantly around him, scrutinizes, interrogates the judgment of each one, solicits applause, betrays secret solicitude; but whatever efforts he makes, he never makes his end certain, but leaves it to be determined by chance and fortune. May the young man, when entering life, defend himself from this passion, rather let us say, this mania, that the contagion of example and received ideas render so overpowering. May he escape the servitude prepared for him. Let him resist, with noble firmness, the allurements of success; let him live *to be*, not *to appear*. The condition of his preserving his character and real energy is this; he must preserve to his talents that character of independence and originality, without which there is no permanent success.

Each of these different kinds of melancholy, may yet have either of two directions, according as it inclines to the past or the future; and this direction still farther modifies their characters. The melancholy, which is nourished by regret for the past, is accompanied with discouragement; its sadness is gloomy; it is exhausted in vain sufferings; its cure is the most difficult. The melancholy which wears the future, by desires impossible to be satisfied, is something agitating, impetuous, indefinite;

it produces trouble without, as well as within ; it is inexperienced, consequently rash and dangerous. It is necessary, by a sort of exchange, to present the future to one kind of melancholy, and to give experience of the past to the other. The first demands consolation, the second demands a guide. We see men, who have exhausted the cup of pleasure, and who are satiated with life, complain of a kind of melancholy ; but their sadness is only the nausea of lassitude and disgust ; it has nothing more of melancholy, than lethargy has of peace. There is always something in melancholy announcing that the powers have deviated from their course, have wandered, or, perhaps, that they are superabundant, and out of proportion with the situation of the individual ; but that, brought back to their true tendency, and finding a career proper for them, they might become fruitful. It denotes that there is a sap, which hardly circulates, which flows back because it finds obstructed some part of the channel where it ought to flow. This is why melancholy is interesting and touching. Virtue feels for it a sort of attraction ; it is pleased to approach it ; it comprehends that it can aid this malady of the soul, and that, in restoring health, it will perhaps draw from it a principle of new vigor.

CHAPTER V.

HOW MORAL CONTRIBUTES TO INTELLECTUAL PROGRESS.

MENTAL endowments are not always united to the qualities of the heart ; talent, instead of being constantly in the service of virtue, too often devotes itself to vanity, frivolity, and even

to corruption ; but we are involuntarily surprised and grieved at this separation, which proves it to be unnatural : the two kinds of merit are fitted to go together. The union of genius and virtue,—is it but a chimera, an illusion of our youth, which experience will contradict ? Is it enough to quote the success obtained by talent, without the aid of morality, in order to prove that the former owes nothing to the latter ? Is it indeed real success, which the mind obtains, when it has been faithless to the heart ? Might we not hope for more useful and real success, by allying our intellect with pure and elevated sentiments ? Is not success, when we win it, owing in a great measure to what still remains of the good, and generous, and pure in our souls, that are only partly led astray by the seductions of vanity or the allurements of pleasure ? or at least, does it not arise from the recollections we have preserved, or in the imaginations we have formed of a better state ?

The powers of the understanding, like those of the body, are instruments placed at our own disposal. Is it then astonishing, that the passions take possession of the powers of the mind, and excite us to acquire learning and skill ; just as they take possession of the bodily faculties to form vigorous wrestlers ? But in consequence of the absolute unity of the human soul, the progressive developement of the moral and of the intellectual faculties cannot remain unconnected with each other.

Intellectual progress does not consist essentially in the extent of acquired knowledge ; but in the harmonious developement of the intellectual powers ; it is that state of the intellect, in which every power preserves its energy and rank, and fulfils its functions, and all are so balanced that they go forward together. Intellectual progress is one of the means of increasing knowledge ; but it especially contributes to our attaining it complete, classified, and regulated in wise proportions ; and secures us against the danger of superficial attainment, which is worse than ignorance. But the essential means of subjecting the mental faculties to this salutary regimen and wise

superiority is in the habit of self-government and moral power. The necessity of the most industry and secret industry, which respects the necessity of the powers of the understanding, the sciences, to which the most regular study is necessary, and in the practice of excellence, naturally introduce more and more the student, and subject all the faculties to the service of wisdom in the respective degrees of subordination.

That we see, that all intellectual progress depends upon a patient and industrious pursuit, the power of mastering our minds; and the triumph, it is true, is the result of the influence the soul exerts over itself, in the calm collectedness which accompanies the love and practice of excellence.

The most industrious are in themselves, and pleasures which belong to it exclusively; but the love of the beautiful and true involves a moral principle, which is developed and quickened by all virtuous sentiments. Vain intentions may be enlisted in study: what may yet itself in the service of ambition, vanity, and even covetousness; but will this calculated interest have anything in common with more for study? That charm which leads us to study for its own sake, making us prefer it to honor and fortune, which is sufficient to render an obscure life delightful, to embelish retreat, and to console us for the injustice of men, is something which corresponds to an entirely disinterested sentiment, and is addressed to what is noblest in our nature. When is it more powerfully felt, than in those hours which peculiarly favor inward peace and independence? It cannot appear in the midst of agitation and anxiety. It is not possible for him who gives access to every outward distraction to feel the collectedness it supposes. The charm it spreads is unknown to him who is not at ease with himself.

But venal intentions not only give most unworthy disciples to the arts and sciences, by substituting a calculation of personal interest for disinterested devotedness; they often deceive this very calculation. Superficial acquirements, mere erudition, and

those unfinished productions, which attest man's eagerness to enjoy, and his impatience to make himself known, are their fruits ; as well as the wanderings of precocious talents and the speedy exhaustion which is the consequence. To the same cause we owe the pretensions and oddities of genius, which mournfully debase those talents, which are unfaithful to their mission ; which sophisticate ideas and sentiments at pleasure ; which stoop to adulation, and, selling themselves to party interests, turn against truth the arms destined for its defence.

The active faculties of the intellect may be ranged under three principal orders ; and thus all causes, which determine real success in the various careers of study, may be brought under three principal points of view : first, the spirit of observation, which collects the elements of the arts and sciences : secondly, the judgment, which puts them in order ; and thirdly, the creative spirit, which discovers, models and realizes. Under each of these three points of view, the mental faculties receive the most important aid from the influence of virtue, in consequence of the harmony and concurrence of the two great moral powers, love of excellence and self-control. This is evident from a few considerations.

1. The spirit of observation is, as it were, the messenger of reason, sent out before to explore and prepare the way. Whether our investigations are directed without, or turned upon ourselves, free attention and independent reflection are necessary. But, if the heart be enslaved, it is difficult for the attention to be free. Our passions imperiously and most frequently distract the mind. Rightly directed attention is only self-control applied to mental movement and to intellectual action. It is only when we are calm, that we can see clearly. At the moment of surprise, the object is indeed more brilliant and strikingly noticed ; but we must wait until the emotion be calmed, before we can submit it to a serious examination, a profound investigation. The emotion of surprise is but a warning : what is destined to enlighten, may first dazzle. A still more perfect

freedom of mind is necessary to the development of the principle of all philosophic study, inward reflection,—that other act of the mind, by means of which it interrogates and examines itself, by which the highest knowledge is revealed and every other is sanctioned and secured. But what will free reflection from all its shackles? Want, but virtue;—virtue, which lifts the soul above outward things, exercises it in secret investigation and sincere self-interrogation; and renders thought familiar to thought. The conscience of the understanding will keep itself awake with the moral conscience. This is not all: in order to be prepared to observe ourselves, we must consent to examine ourselves; and in order to live in self-communion, we must be at peace with ourselves: and virtue adorns and embellishes the internal dwelling place, and calls us to it and keeps us in it, by making it the residence of our true happiness. A soul must be pure to receive truth, as a medium must be transparent to receive the rays of light. But though calmness is necessary for reflection, insensibility would be unfavorable to it. Insensibility is very different from calmness. It may free us from the solicitations which we feel about the interests of others, but it does not deliver us from those, which spring out of personal feeling, which are more active and indefatigable. Vacancy of heart is a source of agitation, while gentle affections and generous sentiments refresh, compose and strengthen the understanding; giving birth to the serene thoughts that are the emanation of purity. The labor of reflection is also facilitated by internal order, as symmetry favors our observation of visible objects. Virtue fears no investigation. It has no motives but what it may confess and love to render an account of; and we would ask, in passing, whether our want of internal order has not injured the progress of the philosophical sciences, and occasioned the false directions of these sciences in countries and ages, where habits have been tainted by a general corruption. It has not been observed with sufficient attention, that positive knowledge, as we must call it by way of distinction, requires a peculiar instrument, the tho-

rough study of our nature, and that this study is, in its turn, intimately connected with the practice of the highest virtues. Perhaps there have been so few great philosophers, because there have been very few eminently virtuous men among those who have cultivated philosophy. Socrates is acknowledged as the restorer of philosophy in ancient times. And why? He taught scarcely anything, except that a knowledge of ourselves is the common and sole source of science and morality. But in this single principle he comprised all the principles of discovery, which were to guide his disciples into the regions of wisdom. The excellent alone can penetrate the meaning of the celebrated oracle of Delphi.

2. Vanity may have its motives for depreciating in the world the merit which belongs to rectitude of judgment: nothing is easier than to be distinguished by renouncing it. There are a thousand ways open by the side of the only path which leads to truth, and we may appear original in each of these ways, by merely being faithful to right reason. To produce an effect, it is enough to unite two ideas, which are astonished at being together; the paradox itself will owe its success to its novelty and boldness. Just minds seem colorless; and simple reason monotonous. Good sense is so vulgar a thing, that we see whole sects of philosophers profess to disdain it. Yet what is philosophy, if it be not a grand commentary upon the lessons of good sense? Is it not good sense, which, by spreading from consequences to consequences, and strengthening these connexions, regulates the understanding securely in the loftiest speculations? Good sense is in judgment what naturalness is in style. But what is the best guardian of good sense, if it be not virtue? What is the best security of mental rectitude, if not uprightness of heart?

Since Aristotle, there have been thousands of treatises on logic. They are wanting in nothing which concerns the decomposition of argument: every case is foreseen, every rule is written, and the operations of the mind are converted into infallible

formulas; in these treatises, the art of logic has become what arithmetical operations are in Pascal's machine; it seems as if nothing were required but to put the instrument in play. But is truth indebted to these for any real progress? In speculative science their aid has not been very effectual; the most useful directions, those which include the management of the mind, have been most neglected. In moral science, and in practical application, the aid has been still less efficacious; for though we know how to prove a proposition in forms, and even to demonstrate a paradox, if we have not ~~learned to~~ love truth, an essential instrument is wanting to its attainment.

There is another logic, which is less known, more necessary, and which we use more than we do that of the schools: this teaches us to think well, by teaching us to govern ourselves well. The art of directing the operations of our mind, is only an exertion of self-control; and to preserve this control over our understanding, we must obtain it over the soul itself, which is the focus of all the human faculties.

There are innocent errors doubtless, but the world is not most indulgent to the errors which are most innocent. And often, when we declare ourselves in error, we do it in order to justify a fault which we have committed. Ignorance also, which we so often take for an excuse, is, on the contrary, the very chief and most serious of our faults, when, as is so often the case, we have had the means of instructing ourselves, and have neglected to use them. How does it happen, then, that intolerance is united with prejudice against knowledge? Truly enlightened men are the more indulgent: they know all that it costs to acquire truth, and how easy it is to stray from it, even when honestly seeking it.

Nothing is more delicate than the relations which exist between the judgment and will; they often escape our watchfulness, and baffle our honest intentions; we think we follow our judgment, when we yield to the guidance of our will. The office of guide belongs, it is true, to the judgment; yet the op-

erations of the mind being actions, and every action having its motives, it happens, that the nature of the motives decides upon the course which the understanding may take, and that we often believe at last what we wish to believe.

Among the causes of our errors, there are two in particular, which are peculiarly influenced by this partiality of the judge : they are those which arise from imperfect views, and those which the illusions of the imagination produce : complex truths, which generally constitute the object of our studies, require to be comprehended in their wholeness ; but a mind prejudiced by passion considers objects only in the light in which this passion places them ; and the prevailing passion, giving new vividness to the deceitful images which borrow the appearance of realities, and delighting in seeing proportions exaggerated and the distance of objects diminished, tinges them with the hues which either its fears or its desires may suggest. Moreover, the more nearly certain opinions affect our interests, the surer they are to tally with these interests : there is nothing in the world less certain than what is apt to affect us most : there is nothing upon which we are less agreed, than what is connected with individual affections. Men only meet upon the ground of axioms, indifferent in themselves ; and although mathematical truths owe their certainty to the evidence of their principles and deductions, they also owe not a little to their not being the subject of passion. Men have been divided even respecting mathematical truths, when any passions have been deeply engaged in their cause. We see multitudes obstinately resolved to expect results in the relative chances of lottery and play, which most exact calculations prove to be impossible. And in other sciences, do we not see the most abstract theorems sometimes become the sport and instruments of the passions, while facts themselves are misconstrued, as soon as they have a motive for bespeaking falsehood ? The advantage, which geometry owes to its peculiar nature, virtue would communicate to all other branches of knowledge ; and we should find it would be no

longer necessary, that propositions should be indifferent in themselves, after we had become impartial. What is better adapted to enlarge the perceptions than generous affections? What means is more efficacious to prevent the wanderings of the imagination, than the habit of restraining ourselves? And since virtue consists in general views, and is guided by the light of justice, and keeps strict watch over our inward being, by the repression of every disorderly movement of our faculties, what can so effectually prevent fantastic delusion?

There are certain passions which belong more particularly to the mind, and often exert the most perceptible influence over its operations: penetrating into certain studies, in which any power less subtle could not find support, they succeed in seducing human reason. But the heart, although secretly, is always the accomplice of these intellectual passions. Thus, curiosity, that noble want given to the intellect to lead it to truth, may yield to the seductions of a presumptuous vanity. Also, the joy of possessing what we believe the truth, when corrupted by pride, becomes an obstinate resistance of truth itself. How many times we think we have an opinion, when our self-love merely is persuaded! These are the false opinions which we sustain with most warmth, and in the defence of which we show most intolerance.

Moral influences then come on all sides to offer themselves to reason, as so many precious auxiliaries: they dissipate clouds, give firmness to our actions, and rectify our tendencies. If they cannot prevent, in quite so direct a manner, the two-fold order of prejudices which arise from imitation and habit, yet they are, in a degree, preservatives. For the prejudices which spring from imitation, are extremely favored by the self-love which servility regards, the opinion of the world, and by the blind routine of habit, which is established and confirmed by a want of self-vigilance. Besides, all prejudices receive their confirmation from the excessive confidence in ourselves, which renders errors irremediable; all kinds of preju-

dices agree in proscribing this learned art of doubt, which would destroy their empire, and open the way to a search after truth. Now, what so well as modesty, conscientious and sincere modesty, the daughter of virtue, teaches this art of doubt, and this salutary self-mistrust, which are the best preparations for true knowledge?

A sound mind takes its place in an honest soul, as its natural dwelling place. In many things, moral sentiment pronounces and decides for us beforehand, in a much surer manner than our reason would have done.

3. The creative power, which produces discoveries in the sciences, and models in the arts, which realizes and applies theories, and receives, according to its different degrees, the names of skill, talent, and genius, is doubtless a gift of nature. It may then be separated from morality of character, which is always an acquired merit. Yet this active and fruitful faculty also has its cultivation. Though there is no art, which can supply the place of talent, when it has been denied us, there is an art, which may awaken and cultivate it; and now let us inquire, if this cultivation does not receive any benefit from moral influences. Nature has not been so sparing of talent as is supposed; it has only distributed it in various degrees, and given it in very different forms, varying each one's talents as it has varied situations and circumstances. Yet, how many germs remain undeveloped, or but imperfectly developed, for want of having obtained a favorable cultivation! How much talent also there is, which excites our admiration, in many of its relations, yet astonishes and afflicts us by its wanderings! How many works are happily conceived, which remain unfinished! Would not the exercises of virtue render fruitful any of those dispositions, which have remained fruitless; and prevent some of those deviations, which seem to render genius faithless to itself? Might they not also bring to perfection some of those brilliant qualities, which resemble unfulfilled hope? Is there no communication between talent, and character, intellectual conceptions, and moral habits? Does the life of the understand-

we receive nothing from the contemplation of the soul: Let those who themselves will, however with nature's favors, and so furnished in the end with every intellectual necessity, a vast intellectual store, and persons find themselves enriched with knowledge and art: but they are, in the early part of their life, a dark and ignorant being, when they think of nature and the wonders of her bounty, do they not receive these benefits from wisdom, and carry it to a point which she has a right to reach? Do not they themselves receive the good which their character and the nature of a being? Let not they hold in themselves a portion of the truth, which they have too much extracted from the rest of their nature? And does not the truth, the person, and the wisdom, which they have too much extracted from the rest of their nature? And does not the truth, the person, and the wisdom, which they have too much extracted from the rest of their nature?

Three essential conditions seem to concur in the development of the creative faculty. The power of which we desire so much, and the springs of which we study so little: first, a peculiar reason of mind, which acting in its measure, disposing it itself, involving itself without it, and penetrating everywhere, passes everywhere the elements which are to serve for new combinations, and like the bee, draws sweets from every flower: secondly, that love of order, that taste for the fitness of things, which aims is to seize upon the relations which are most natural, just and extensive, although the most hidden and remote; which thus presides over learned classifications and heterogeneous extractions, and makes the unknown spring from the bosom of the known: thirdly, that energy of mind, which collects and combines scattered ideas, and by greater or less vastness of the principle of association, produces a more or less majestic whole. Now, is there a single one of these conditions, which the concurrence of moral influences does not aid to fulfil? Can the influence of self-control, which is no other than the principle of all moral liberty, be unessential to the enjoyment of intellectual liberty? and can the influence of that

love of excellence, which is but the love of essential and perfect order, be unessential to the nurture of the love of order? Will the energy of the mind receive no aid from the salutary discipline, which preserves the health and vigor of the soul? And will not great thoughts become more accessible to him, who forms the habit of noble actions? Will not the love of the beautiful and true, that noble, ardent, and pure passion, which preserves and exalts the powers of the intellect, find aliment in the passion for the excellent; or rather, is it not one with it? Is not a noble action, a thought of genius realized in practice? Yes; let us clothe talent in its lawful dignity; let us restore to it its titles of consanguinity with virtue, which it received from nature itself,—a consanguinity which encourages and honors it. O you, who, in the glorious days of youth, thrill with generous transport at the views which genius opens to mankind; who believe yourselves to hear within you its eloquent call; you, who feel capable of aspiring to the palms which are reserved for it; fear not to seek, in your moral improvement, a real initiation into the exercises of the mind!

What must you have? Elevated points of view? Where will you find any higher, than those summits upon which our nature communes with a superior essence? Must you have emotions at once calm and deep, which may become fruitful inspirations to you? Where will you obtain them, if not in the generous affections which accompany self-forgetfulness? Virtuous habits will secure the talent which has fallen to your lot from being lost in indolence, from wandering in a false direction, and from being wasted in vain and fruitless conceptions; they will give it its highest value, and prepare for it its beautiful crown, by calling it to serve the interests of humanity. Let us observe, in the brilliant acts which adorn the world, how many luminous thoughts have emanated from moral sentiments, and spread afar an immortal brightness; what archetypes virtue has offered to poetry and the arts of design; what eloquence it has suggested to music itself; what new life, what soul it has diffused through

all the pictures which the imagination sketches ; what sublimity it has given to the flights of the orator, to the views of the historian, to the considerations which comprehend the knowledge of human things. How many victories are misconceived and disdained by self-elevated talent, which virtue might teach us to obtain ! This is what remains ever new and inexhaustible : it is a mine of discoveries, which, in various regions, may be obtained by moral inspirations.

In the exact sciences themselves, in those positive sciences, which, spurning the assistance of the imagination, only admit facts, or calculations, and only need the most rigorous processes, the spirit of method will be favored by the habits of order formed in the practice of virtue ; the spirit of invention will be seconded by taste for serious meditations ; perseverance in labor will be kept up by patience, and by the impulse of a disinterested zeal for what is of general utility. The art of conceiving great plans will find support in those useful exercises which direct our thoughts to the vast relations of moral ideas, rendering them familiar to us, and teaching us to see, in universal maxims, individual and close applications. The relations of general to particular views, of theories to facts, and rules to practice, is nowhere better shown than in morality.

All creation is but a combination : Now selfishness, of all dissolvents, is the most active ; and love is the most powerful of all principles of union and amalgamation. A vigorous thought is the union of ideas which were extremely remote from one another in the order of acquisition, but which are united by analogy. Now in the ideas which concern human affairs, love and virtue have a magic power in revealing secret affinities, since they are full of an attracting force and an exquisite sense of the fitness of things.

There is at least one superiority which selfishness claims with assurance, and which the opinion of the world hardly refuses it : it is skill in what is called business. It would not be astonishing if selfishness were the best inspiration of the cal-

culations which have respect to personal interest, because in the pursuit of this interest it has most perseverance, and because the choice of means being a matter of indifference to it, it can pursue short paths which a delicate morality forbids. Virtue in these respects confesses the disadvantages of its condition, accepts, and is honored by them; but it possesses compensations which belong to it exclusively. Wise views and honorable sentiments are likewise guides for conduct; the esteem of others, and the consciousness of our own esteem, give to us firmness and assurance in those affairs which suppose intercourse with other men. We exert over other men, a truer and more lasting, although perhaps a slower influence, by the confidence we inspire in them, than by all the combinations of art. 'Honest hearts,' we say, 'are often deceived; they know little of men and of the world; they hope too easily, and judge too favorably!' But are not insensible and selfish hearts also deceived in their way, in their judgments? Their errors are only on the other side: they are errors of injustice. Every opinion which we seek to form of other men can only be a presumption, or probability: therefore the most prudent and best intended opinion will necessarily prove false sometimes, by the natural play of circumstances in probable things; whence it follows, that in order to be equitable in the judgments we form on this subject, we must expose ourselves to be deceived sometimes, and to find our judgments faulty; whence it also follows, that he who never thought too favorably of his fellow-creatures, might be accused of judging them habitually with too much severity; he who is never deceived in absolving other men, is frequently so in condemning them wrongfully. If such is the merit of selfishness, let it enjoy and triumph in it! This advantage is worthy of it. As for us, we consent to bear the blame of sometimes thinking our brethren better than they are, rather than that of judging them habitually worse than they are. Where are the elements of that great and difficult art of knowing the human heart? Have we any instrument whatever

er which penetrates directly into the secret of the springs by which others are moved? Whence do we draw the inductions which reveal to us an order of phenomena which cannot be directly perceived? The spirit of observation must here be seconded by inward reflection: it is in ourselves that we should study others, because it is in ourselves that we find the solution of problems which the experience of life and the world presents; and this is why we commonly judge other men like ourselves. To have mingled with the world, to have noticed it in every sense, is not to have really known it and judged it, if we have not first learnt to judge ourselves.

CHAPTER VI.

HOW MAN IS LED TO RELIGION BY THE DEVELOPEMENT OF THE MORAL POWERS.

As religious sentiments lead to virtue, so virtue leads to religion; and this less familiar consideration is perhaps very advantageous to religion itself. It is doubtless a lawful triumph for religion to see how much man improves under its influence; but it is also a noble testimony in its favor, that pure and honest hearts naturally tend towards it. In sound logic, moral truths are very necessary premises of religious truths. All moral sentiments, also, call upon religious sentiments to purify and bring them to perfection. Under this double relation, morality is, then, a true religious initiation. Even as civilisation bears witness to the existence of a political, so morality proves that of a Divine legislator; what the former certifies in society, the latter attests in the sanctuary of nature. The political legislator has not created public and private morality; he has found it preexisting; he rests upon it, and it serves him as an instrument.

But who inspired,—whence came this genius of morality? Who traced that primitive code which has served as an archetype and pattern for the particular codes of every nation? If the order which is manifested in the outward universe, shows plainly to all men the agency of Supreme Providence, does not the order of the phenomena of moral nature indicate an author? Moral order, considered as the universal legislation of mankind, gives beauty to the general system of the universe, completes its harmony, and quickens it with a new and sublime life.

Is it not a circumstance worthy of attention, that so many imperious inclinations have been placed in the heart of man, and so many circumstances around him, to conduct him to that state of society, in which alone his faculties can be fully developed? Plants obtain air, light, and soil, necessary for their growth; the animal who must seek his nourishment, receives the instinct necessary to find it, and organs suitable to obtain and secure it. Man, who expects everything from uniting with his fellow-creatures, and from the combination of forces, receives affections, thought, and language,—that is, precisely what may put him in relation with his fellow-beings: besides, he is born more weak and dependent than other animals, while at the same time he alone is born capable of perfection. The social principle explains this apparent contradiction which disappears in society. Now society, in its turn, calls upon and requires morality, as a condition essential to its existence, and as the chief means of its progress. In the relation of all these things to each other, there is, then, a plan and design, of which human nature is the theatre; the Supreme Legislator has been the architect, and virtue is the fundamental condition. In this plan, the same wisdom which called man to the social state for the education of his faculties, instituted the code of moral duties to serve as a bond to the social state; and this great thought has presided in all ages over the destinies of the human race.

Is there anything better adapted to show divine wisdom and goodness, than this harmony between what is moral and what

is really useful, useful to all, and to each ;—this dispensation, by virtue of which the sacrifice required of the individual, is found to be for the general interest ;—and that other dispensation, which makes the individual find, in another and better form, what duty leads him to sacrifice for the advantage of others ?

Thus, the moral code is a vast and beneficent foresight extending over mankind ; it is a tutelary protection instituted for our weakness ; it resembles the recommendations of paternal tenderness. Does it not then reveal the solicitude of an invisible and Supreme Father ? Providence does not rely upon our prudence alone, to provide for our happiness ; and, just as it has given instinct to the animal, from interest for his preservation, it has given to man the sublime instinct of virtue, from interest for his felicity. In bestowing free will and intellect upon his creature, the Creator has given us a guide in the form of duty.

Thus morality is an eloquent witness of the divine nature, and the more deeply virtue is felt, the better Providence is understood. Besides, if moral truths were not indisputably acknowledged as self-evident, it would become impossible for reason to demonstrate the attributes of God. No demonstration of this kind has ever been attempted, except by setting out from principles of natural morality, as from so many indisputable axioms. If there were not an essential difference between good and evil, how could reason form any idea whatever of a being of sovereign goodness ? By what right should we attach notions of justice, truth, wisdom, and excellence, to the divine essence, if these attributes were not already acknowledged as real perfections, and if there were not consequently a principle determining their moral character ? No revelation could make up for this ; for the certainty of all revelation depends, beforehand, upon the supposition that the Infinite Being cannot deceive ; consequently, upon this moral principle, that falsehood is an imperfection and a stain.

The belief in a future beyond the tomb, is doubtless found.

ed upon powerful inferences drawn from the ordinary course of nature. For nothing perishes in the elements which compose nature; they only change their form, by passing into various combinations. Now reason and analogy equally show that the principle of individuality, in the intelligent and sensible being, is necessarily one, and cannot suffer dissolution, since it is elementary. But these inferences would still leave a thick veil over the destinies which compose the important futurity. It is reserved for moral truths to raise this veil, by showing us, on the one hand, an equitable judge in the Supreme Dispenser; and by showing us, on the other, merit or demerit in human actions. Excellence would not be excellence because it is rewarded; and evil evil because it is punished. It is just the contrary; as the terms of rewards and punishments declare. It is then necessary that virtue itself should be something real, and worthy of great price, that we may apply to it the consequences deduced from the notion of an infinite justice and of a supreme judge, associated with that of a sovereign remunerator.

Thus virtue bears witness to immortality. And the more deeply virtue is felt, the better the hopes of this great future are understood. We find in these hopes our proper destiny; explaining our earthly condition. A spectator, placed at the foot of a vast and regular edifice, cannot embrace all the parts in one glance; but those which are presented to his eye, give him a conception of the design of the architect; he completes in his mind what he has not yet been able to perceive; he prolongs the lines, and sees the point where they must unite; he penetrates beforehand into the secret depths. Such is the inference which morality authorises us to form, about the as yet invisible portion of our destiny. Virtue upon earth is the peristyle of a great future. It is so regularly, so harmoniously and wisely concerted, it makes us foresee exactly how its plans are accomplished and consummated. The whole moral nature is a grand prelude, a magnificent promise. It is a relation

whose first terms only we hold. It is a triangle whose base we occupy, and the summit of which is as yet veiled in a cloud. This new progression, of which the present and terrestrial man occupies the first steps, seems to be exhibited, already, as an image or sketch, on the bosom of human nature, by means of the scale of moral superiorities. So far as the good man is superior to the wicked, so far he feels that there is something much superior to himself. This presentiment of a better world, increases with the degree of his progress. Who has not, in certain moments of his life, obtained a foreknowledge of it? Must we then always cast our eyes downward, and never raise them towards the summits which tower above our weak nature? I have seen a family assembled in a domestic oratory; the mother offering to God those to whom she gave existence; the father blessing his children; youthful hearts rendering thanks to the Heavenly Parent, whose tutelary providence they well understood, accustomed as they were to meet it in the interpreters it has chosen here below. O how beautiful is religion, since it can heighten the loveliness of a family picture!—I have seen a confused multitude united in a temple; every soul was concentrated, every mind mingled in the same thought; and hearts were blended in song; the poor man, by the side of the rich without being jealous, had forgotten his miseries: the rich man learnt his own indigence; brotherly love, which seems to banish all social distinctions in the world, awoke free and pure: all had obtained intelligence of their destiny; all prepared for it, rejoicing together; all advanced with an equal step. How human nature is ennobled, when in this attitude! how many dark mysteries are cleared away! how much discord is hushed! The whole earth seems to pride itself in the dignity which the most noble of mortal creatures has just acquired: the whole system of the universe is explained. Of all the kinds of worship, that which has obtained the most general and lasting success among mankind, and the only one which has owed its success entirely to free and individual conviction, and

which has triumphed by the mere force of this conviction, over all the resistance of prejudice and force, is that which has the rare privilege of fully satisfying the wishes and wants of morality. It is through this character, which so eminently distinguishes it, that its first defenders made their most eloquent vindications; they well knew that by calling virtue as a witness, it would not deceive their expectations. Its first conquests, also, were either among good and simple men who had resisted the corruption of the age, or among the sages who had deeply meditated upon the eternal laws of morality, such as Justin, Theophilus, Athenagoras, and Clement of Alexandria. What a magnificent homage rendered to Christianity, that it has been able to cause desertion from the school of Plato! *

In the general system of beings, everything proceeds in a continued gradation, as everything tends to extreme simplicity, whatever may be the wonderful complication of means. It is an immense pyramid, the regularity of which we discover more clearly, the more minutely we examine the details. At the lowest degree lie inanimate and unorganized substances: organization is successively produced and manifested, which soon receives the breath of life, feeling being as yet but a sensation, and action but simple mobility. With morality and intelligence commences a new world, which crowns the preceding; it is the atmosphere into which man enters, but it only commences with him. Would the scale be suddenly interrupted? Would the progression stop at the very point where our view grows faint? Would all that is preeminent in the whole of the system be excluded from the common law? Would the plan remain incomplete, where it became most important? Alas! it would have been better to have left it unfinished in inferior species. Nature could have dispensed with insects and reptiles; but not with higher degrees of intellect and goodness.

* All the Fathers of the church have agreed to present moral truths as the first truths of Christianity; and to seek the most brilliant proofs of Christianity in its conformity with a pure natural morality.

Yes, man is an intermedial link in the chain of beings. As he sees what is at his feet, so he has a presentiment of what is above him. All that is most elevated in humanity, moral and intellectual perfection, is exactly what approaches most nearly to a superior nature, and what receives from it the most direct influences.

Alas ! what would mean that secret but insatiable emotion of our souls, which incessantly directs towards a higher perfection all those sighs, which constantly call for a better state, and all those glances, turned upward, which are the expectation of the accomplishment of a great mystery ? What would mean that idea of infinity, which becomes the most cruel poison if it is not a just and glorious hope, that tendency to higher states ;—those desires which call upon all that is capable of elevating us ;—that inward sentiment which declares that we are the neophytes of a better life ;—that natural dignity and pride which is so unjustifiable, when we consider only what we really are ;—those purer and warm affections, which would otherwise have so transient an object ;—that faculty of loving, which would only find such imperfect and limited objects ; and that virtue, so true in all which we can control by experience, and which would be baffled in its dearest interests in what we cannot yet verify ? What would earth be, the orphan of GOD ? What would be humanity, disinherited of immortal life ? O does not all morality invoke and proclaim with a unanimous voice this last relation of man with his Author, of the present with the future, which alone solves all the problems of existence ! Religion, doubtless, is a sigh of weakness ; but it is, above all, a wish and want of virtue, which alone nourishes those noble instincts which religion is to satisfy. Virtue thrills at the sight of religion, with the same joy a son feels when he flies into the arms of his mother. And what voice would be raised within men to answer to the Creator's voice, if not that of conscience ? What powers would greet and receive religion, when presenting itself upon earth, and would bring to it the reverence of men, if not those moral

powers by which humanity is animated, elevated, and directed? What principle could germinate religious truths, in a soul deprived of the sense of what is just and good? What intelligible language could piety address to a heart deaf to virtue? Of what use is it to seek laboriously, whether or not in some corner of the globe some ignorant colony may be found, which, sunk into stupidity by the want of the chief necessaries of life, has only confused ideas of the Supreme Benefactor, and the worship due to him? What is the importance we attach to the vague narrations of travellers? Yes, religious ideas enlarge and develop with civilisation, because they can only spring up with moral habits; and this is what proves their affinity with moral sentiment. They acquire grandeur and truth in proportion to the purity and energy of this sentiment. Of what use is it to accumulate so many wretched examples of blind or cruel superstitions, which have sullied the worship of GOD upon earth? It is true that man will carry into his worship his passions and his errors, and necessarily corrupt by adopting it. But it is no longer the worship of the divine nature: it is profanation; and nothing proves better than this, how natural a preparation are purity of heart and innocence of life, for true religious sentiment. Let us seek for facts more adapted to instruct us, in the aspirations of mankind. The experience of a good man is that which I consult, and upon which I rest. Religious sentiment in him will be, as it were, but the continuation and consequence of those sentiments which already filled his soul, taking a wider range. He will be religious, for he deserves to be so. All there is in him pure, laudable and generous, will be satisfied. He thirsted for justice, and the streams of an eternal, infinite, universal justice will flow before him, and all the wrongs of the earth will be repaired. He delights in the emotion of gratitude; he will have discovered the Author of all blessings. An ideal wandered in his thoughts; he will find it realized. He placed his happiness in devotedness; he will be able to consecrate all the faculties of his being to a boundless love, and to make a tribute to GOD himself, of the good he does to other men.

By the practice of excellence, then, the virtuous man is already the neophyte of religion : he desires it, he calls for it ; he is prepared to understand it ; he makes ready a temple for it within himself : and what temple is more worthy of it than the heart of the good man ? He will not be false to its teachings ; he will not pervert its august character ; he will not corrupt it by the mixture of impure passions. Religion will not be to him an instrument, but an end. He will profess it, not to show, but to enjoy it ; he will enjoy it, not as a vain allegory which amuses his imagination, but as a profound truth which fills his heart ; not as a peculiar privilege which flatters his vanity, but as the patrimony of all mankind ; not as a distinction which insulates him, but as a bond which unites him more closely to his brethren. He will not seek in it the right of condemning others, but the duty of judging himself more severely ; he will not seek in it a means of encouraging himself in his errors, of dispensing with active obligations, but a light which may guard him from erring, a power to triumph over obstacles, an encouragement to do better. In a word, he will enter into the true spirit of religion, because he will be inspired by the uprightness of his heart.

Intellectual progress contributes also to the developement of a truly religious spirit. For it must not be forgotten that intellectual progress depends much less upon extensive acquirements, than upon that harmony of the faculties, which is the health of the understanding. Now, religious truths present themselves naturally to a good mind, as a good mind is required to understand them. Providence wills that these truths should be founded upon good sense ;* and it ought to be so, since they are the inheritance of all men. These inferences of common sense are enriched and strengthened by everything brought by judicious learning ; even as they may grow weak with increase of knowledge, if the mind contract vicious habits. They share

* This the author hopes to have demonstrated, in a treatise upon the existence of GOD, which he intends to publish.

this destiny and these dangers with all moral and philosophical truths. From the salutary influence which they exert over intellectual progress, wisdom and virtue carry a new tribute to religion.

What are those superficial observations which present philosophy to us as hostile to religious doctrines?

Whence has been taken a supposition so evidently contradicted by the nature of things? Is it enough that some writers, in the name of philosophy, have attacked some of these doctrines? Has there been no writer, then, who, in the name of religion, has attempted to justify superstition or fanaticism? Let us leave this observation of to-day, and recur to the language of history! Observe in all countries and ages the sacred band of genuine sages, proclaiming with unanimous testimony the harmony of religion and morality, as a fundamental truth of reason, and the noblest and most useful prerogative of human nature! These are better auxiliaries of religious ideas than the apologists of ignorance.

The causes, which, by rendering man unfaithful to the true spirit of religion, corrupt its precious fruits, and the causes which alienate him from religion, by preventing him from rising to it, are very analogous. Man often passes, alternately, from one of these two states to the other; and often also, among different individuals, the mere glimpse of one of these states, contributes to throw them into the other.

When religious ideas are perverted, the weakness of the human mind and the narrow limits in which it is confined, must not alone be arraigned. Too often, it is true, instead of rising to these lofty conceptions, it endeavours to bring them down to itself; it sullies their purity by mingling with them the fantastic and coarse productions of the imagination and senses; it mutilates them in order to subject them to its own habits; it partly veils them in the clouds of its ignorance.

But the passions are generally accomplices of this profanation; perhaps the secret passions; but because secret, their rav-

ages will only be more certain. Selfishness will bring its ever interested and mercenary intentions into religious views ; it will seek in religious ceremonies a prompt, direct and powerful means of satisfying temporal interests and sensual desires. Pride will take possession of the externals of religion, in order to justify itself in its individual pretensions, and to confirm itself in its disdain for others. Envy associating with pride, to produce sectarianism, will seek in religious doctrines arms for lamentable combats, and will exercise itself in animosities and revenge. As the weakness of reason sometimes bends in the presence of these sublime considerations, so weakness of character will tend not less to corrupt them. It will find in them only a source of terror ; it will reap only dejection, and perhaps despair, from that noble communion in which man was to find a new life and renewal of strength. Four different and principal causes conduce generally to irreligion.

First, skepticism of mind.—But skepticism, so far as it is a play of the reasoning faculties, is much more rare than we think. Absolute doubt cannot constitute itself into a doctrine, without falling into an evident contradiction. Generally, skepticism is not a system, though it has the form of one ; but a malady of the mind. It is the infirmity of an intellect that has more subtlety than justice, more penetration than comprehensiveness, more cleverness than vigor—which, stopping at details without seizing upon the whole, succumbs to every objection, without comprehending the reach of proof. The most frequent and general cause of irreligion, perhaps, is the indifference which springs from frivolity, or results from that preoccupation of the mind with material interests, which makes man morally puerile. It is the want of reflection, in that dissipated being, who has neither interrogated his destiny, nor consulted his conscience. It is the sleepiness of a heart that has not yet felt the want of great and generous affections. It is the consequence of slavery to sensual pleasures, and the reckless dulness that accompanies all servitude. Some melancholy men do not abandon religious ideas from being es-

tranged, but from being discouraged. They are afflicted by this great privation, as for a fast of reason and the heart. They are afflicted for the human race as well as for themselves. They can only see through a glass darkly; their imagination puts creation and themselves into mourning; they only see disorders, moral and physical; they lose themselves in them as in a labyrinth; they despair of the future and of all destiny; they suppose in the unknown only evil influences; and these sad dispositions increase still more in those who have been the victims of the injustice of men and the caprice of fate; and they are especially developed in those who feel inward inquietude, and are discontented with themselves. But religion has no mortal enemy, save immorality and corruption. A man must be degraded to the last degree, before he can be completely divorced from it.

Let the young, therefore, keep their hearts pure, and love truth, and they may interrogate their nature in good faith; and they will find the voice of reason and conscience in accordance, which will reveal all that it is necessary to know.

BOOK III.

THE CULTURE OF THE MORAL POWERS.

SECTION I.

INWARD DISCIPLINE.

CHAPTER I.

SIMPLICITY.

THE love of excellence and the principle of self-control are cultivated under two general conditions; simplicity and exercise: the former, a conservative principle; the latter, active and creative: simplicity, protecting our faculties in their original source; exercise, seconding them in their progressive development.

Let us at first meditate upon what is peculiar to each of these two general conditions. Afterwards we will proceed to say how they can be cultivated, according to the peculiar nature of each.

We are not called upon to attain simplicity; but only to remain faithful to it. Like innocence, it is to be preserved; it cannot be recovered after it is lost. He who wishes to produce it, only adds one thing more to his artificial character;

for it cannot come through imitation. The reason that simplicity accompanies perfection, is, that perfection consists in conformity to the intentions of nature.

In the arts, simplicity is an essential characteristic of the sublime and beautiful, elevating the great to the sublime, and adding grace to beauty. It is truth personified and put into action; rejecting all that profuseness, which retards effect, all that complication which renders it doubtful; allowing no details, but those which have reference to the end, no expressions which are not faithful to the thought, no ornaments which do not spring from the subject, no attributes, except those which harmonize with the nature of the thing. Displaying the unity of the design, it makes the intention of the artist breathe from every part; so that the work, conceived by a single thought and executed by a single stroke, will produce one decided impression, with which the spectator is immediately seized.

This character, which genius impresses on its productions, which is the whole secret of art, arises from a simplicity in the manner of conceiving and feeling. Mediocrity torments itself to multiply means, because it feels itself insufficient. Genius is composed, because it is confident, and confident because it is strong. It sees the end, and the direct way to it; conceiving the design exactly, and embracing it entirely, because it is filled with the subject. Now simplicity preserves the vigor of genius, by preserving its spontaneous freedom and native originality. Genius indeed, studies incessantly; not, however, to obtain the original conception of truth, but to be constantly penetrated by it. It wishes to be filled with that which is reproduced in its works: forgetting itself, it would become one with truth. Like a priest inspired by the god, in delivering its oracles, genius is merely an interpreter.

The same assistance, which simplicity lends to genius in the arts, it lends to virtue in the moral education of man. It adorns a great and beautiful character, by preserving to the heart its virginity, to the powers their soundness; to motives

their purity. In character, it is truth of sentiment and faithful action ; and in mind, truth of thought and adequate expression. It is to virtue what good sense is to reason.

Simplicity of manners and language is approved by the worldly as the natural accompaniment of what is noble and distinguished ; yet simplicity of character, of which this is the image, is rarely appreciated. This is because it is difficult for the worldly to understand it. How can the man be understood, who only seeks the end prescribed by duty, by those, who, while they act, are thinking of the opinion of others? While the worldly live for spectators, the simple man lives for reality ; he passes along unperceived, and rejoices in this obscurity, because by it he remains more free. But when he executes great things, naturally, and with ease,—having lived unremarked, and perhaps disdained,—what surprise he excites ! Being compelled to admire him, men ask whence he derived such miraculous powers? and they find it was from that very simplicity, which made him overlooked, but which allowed him silently to collect all the energies of his nature. While the worldly have wasted the gifts of nature, he has preserved them entire ; while they have wandered by chance, he has gone towards the goal assigned to him ; while they have grown old, he has preserved the freshness of youth ; while they have sunk under the chains they have imposed upon themselves, he has remained obedient to primitive inspirations. They had classed him with the vulgar ; but now they are the vulgar in comparison with him.

To preserve the generous sentiments, of which nature has placed the germ in our soul, especially the love of excellence, which lays them under a common law ; and to do this amidst the tumult which is around us, the events, the attention of others ; and diverted, as we often are, discouraged, subject to the exigences of opinion,—simplicity is the only effectual guardian. It watches at the entrance of the soul, and repels the invasion of everything which would bring into it confusion and disorder.

The love of excellence displays itself in the simple, as light does in a transparent crystal, penetrating without difficulty. It is exhibited there in all its purity, rejoicing and happy. Virtue is so truly ours, we are so truly born for it, that we understand it better, the more entirely we remain in our proper place; and its eloquence is in proportion to our ingenuousness. The ways of virtue are direct, its notions clear, its precepts just. The simple heart finds it fit nourishment, and dwells in the sentiment which it inspires, delivering itself up frankly, and reposing securely; for all is one in virtue; all is planned; while everything else but virtue is scattered, disordered, and complicated.

Unity in variety, that celebrated motto, which contains thoughts so profound, the key of the highest metaphysical speculations among the ancient Platonists, is also the key to moral theories.* It is a summary of the internal life of man, and of his relations with the universe, as well as a symbol of the universe itself.† Unity expresses what is good, powerful and true; diversity, or variety, is in itself a source of weakness, corruption and error; but when subjected to unity by the power of order, perfection results. Variety is the cause of divergency; it is the chaos of the innumerable propensities of personal interest; it is an abundance of external impressions, and a medley of strange opinions. Unity is the end of improvement; it is duty, ever immutable, and always in harmony with itself; it is the inward regulator. Misfortune, vice, everything which degrades and leads the soul astray, is discord; but peace, dignity, and everything which enlightens

* This is because the metaphysical speculations of Plato were properly a reflection of morality.

† God, the supreme unity, creating the variety of beings, subjecting them to general laws; the human soul, the created unity, conceiving, at least in part, this variety, subjecting it to the operations of the arts, without, and to the rules of morality, within,—are the two unities, placed, one at the summit, and the other at the lowest degree of the scale of intelligence; answering to each other as the drop of dew answers to the star of day, whose light it reflects. Unity in diversity.

and elevates it, tends to unity. Now unity is the portion of the simple ; they receive, understand and keep it. Unity of views and sentiments dwells in simplicity ; simplicity is the vase which holds the gifts of virtue.

If we are doubtful of our own intentions, if we are deceived about our own views, it is because we admit a plurality of motives : ambiguity arises from complication. Simplicity is a habit of candor and honesty, which the soul forms in its dealings with itself. We may have mental reservations in self-intercourse as well as in our intercourse with others : simplicity banishes both. There is nothing in it, which may not be confessed and seen. From this inward sincerity springs a *naïve* and frank integrity of manner. Simplicity does not secretly take back a portion of what it gives ; it does not secretly retract what it says ; it neither has reservations nor concealments ; it is not lost in interpretations, and commentaries, and subtle distinctions ; it says *yes* or *no*. A few words are sufficient for it ; its glance alone is language ; it has expressions exclusively its own, which stamp as with an inimitable seal, carrying certain conviction. Its negligences are charmingly graceful, because they evidence disinterested self-forgetfulness ; they are like those waving draperies, which the hand of art suffers to flow like a light veil over the most beautiful forms. How easy and sure simplicity renders everything ! What liberty of motion ! What rapidity of progress ! What perseverance of purpose ! What cordiality in affections ! What self-forgetfulness in friendship ! What exchanges of confidence ! What peaceful relations with others !

Simplicity neither wearies, wounds, nor irritates self-love ; it knows how to praise sincerely. It is the most efficacious antidote of the poison of susceptibility. It captivates without effort, because it has no design of captivating : it especially attracts the tender and delicate. Its severity may indeed be the greater, since the principle of it is not suspected : it gives itself up, and submits fully to judgment, because it suffers it-

self to be known entirely, not avoiding investigation, seeking no suffrages, confessing everything, even its own defects, or rather suffering them to be seen.

We always act with restraint, when we act before others, if we are preoccupied with their presence, and with the idea that we are perceived by them. As soon as we have consented to yield to the yoke of opinion, everything is sophisticated; we can no longer think nor act from ourselves; things lose their real and proper value, in order to receive one purely conventional; precautions are to be multiplied, a multitude of consequences foreseen, and the most contradictory prejudices indulged: we know not what to expect; we fear betraying ourselves continually; we are in a state of perpetual observation; we are restless; we walk on burning coals; we conceive a thousand designs, which we cannot maintain; at the same time we cannot estimate the advantages we possess; we judge ourselves, not by our merit, but by our skill; we do not seek the consequence, but success; and this seeming, doubtful success, depends upon the most exacting, frivolous judge; and finally, though ambitious for success, we wish to appear indifferent to it; and this ambition flows back to torment, agitate, and trouble us. Daring no longer to confide in our own capacity, we even lose a portion of the merit of our virtues; we cannot tell in what we do, what is done from the inspiration of a pure sentiment, and what the mere consideration, which we desire to enjoy, inspires us to do. Before abandoning ourselves to a generous emotion, we look around us, to know whether we are observed, and whether we shall be allowed to give ourselves up to it. In an act of devotion we think of our attitude. Thus, inspiration is not preserved free, natural, spontaneous, and it cannot shoot forth into production.

Simplicity of character, by freeing us from a thousand shackles, protects self-government, as it protects the love of excellence, because we escape, by it, all unnatural situations of the heart. It is always strong, because it uses its powers

with economy ; reserving them for the decisive moment, and bringing them forth in view of a clearly perceived end. It is not fatigued by the efforts, which the necessity of taking a part requires, and by the affectation and over refinement, which are its consequence ; it does not waste itself in a vain labor, which would have for its object merely the art of appearing. It acts with the freshness of the morning, and enjoys all the vigor of youth.

Simplicity procures a healthful repose for the mind and heart. It prevents us from being tormented, in a thousand ways, by vain and trifling solitudes. It guards us from the excess of an inquietude, which wants to foresee, and to be, everything. It accustoms us to see and to take things as they are. And why, after all, should we be disturbed ? What do we seek, and what shall we gain, by so much toil ? What is this fruitless torture, which we impose upon ourselves ? Why do we not allow ourselves to breathe ? The good that we pursue, is nearer to our soul than we think ; it would come to it, if we only consented to be more calm. Let us not be deceived : if we are so much interested in finding outward supports, it is because we feel our own weakness ; we run to meet the yoke, in order to dispense with having a will of our own, and consequently, with making an effort. Let us be simple, and we shall dare more ; we shall rely less on foreign aid ; we shall have fewer difficulties to conquer ; we shall judge of our strength better, and exert it more calmly.

The world imagines, that in simplicity there is a want of sagacity ; and laughs at what it supposes its ignorance. Yes, it is ignorant, but it is a happy ignorance of useless things. Besides, it is full of true knowledge, such as springs from the power of knowing one's self. If there are a multitude of details, which it does not understand, yet what rapid and sure understanding it has of all which is noble, generous and great !

Sometimes, virtuous persons are wanting in simplicity, even

in the practice of virtue. They suffer themselves to be prepossessed with subtle views; they give themselves up to disquieting investigations; they burthen themselves with too many minute observances; they torment themselves too severely with their own tyrannical and finical vigilance. They load themselves with useless chains, with gratuitous and fruitless duties. They suspect themselves unjustly, they raise doubts, imagine interpretations of their best intentions, and conceive an excessive mistrust of themselves. Thus the labor of improvement becomes uselessly complicated, and therefore difficult; the way of excellence becomes entangled, and they cannot pursue it freely. Sometimes they disdain the every day virtues too much, and are tormented with a desire for extraordinary things; they cannot comprehend, that perfection should neither depend upon happy circumstances, nor a magnificent scene of action.

Here we meet with a striking consideration: what raises the value of simplicity is, that, while it is one of the essential and fundamental conditions of our moral education, it is also a condition, which is accessible to the greatest number of men, and to the very classes least favored; the most obscure situations are indebted to their obscurity for this advantage.

Simplicity of tastes is to happiness, what simplicity of heart is to virtue. They favor each other, and both derive wealth from economy.

CHAPTER II.

EXERCISE AND HABITS.

ALL education is but a succession of exercises, rightly conceived and wisely graduated. It is the nature of our faculties to be developed by being exercised: provided, however, that

the exercise be progressive, and never exceed the just measure, which the actual state of our strength permits.

Habits are new ways of existing; they are acquired dispositions, resulting from an exercise, or from an inaction, more or less prolonged. The great object of education is, to make us acquire, with good habits, more extensive capacities; but we may be seriously mistaken as to the nature of useful exercises, the character of habits, and the effects they may produce.

Continued or frequent repetition not only acts with various, but contrary influences upon our physical organs, our active faculties, our external sensibility, and our moral affections.

For want of knowing how to distinguish these things clearly, great errors have been committed in school education; very serious mistakes may be made, for the same reason, in self-education. We must learn to know how much man depends upon his organs; and also what power he has over them.

The very numerous phenomena which result from repeated exercises, and which, transforming the primitive state of man, create a new nature, may be arranged under some general laws.

A sensation gradually loses its intensity by repetition, and at last hardly attracts attention; the pleasure or pain, connected with it, decreasing at the same time. But, what is singular, the sensation which ceases to be agreeable, or was even indifferent, becomes in some way necessary, from habitual repetition. We no longer enjoy it; but we cannot do without it. Thus arise artificial wants; thus pleasures become chains.

Organic action, by being repeated, becomes much easier and more prompt. It becomes so easy, indeed, that it is performed of itself, and without reflection. We know the prodigious phenomena of this kind of habit; we see familiar and evident examples of it, in games of skill, and in the different mechanical professions. External movements, having become

habitual through frequent repetition, do not wait for a signal from our will. They anticipate volition; recurring even against our will, whenever the circumstances of place and time, with which they are connected, return. They become automatical, and are confounded with the movements that belong to the vital functions. Contrary movement becomes impossible, and therefore, these habits may be a resistance and an obstacle to the execution of voluntary determinations.

The imagination, in so far as it is a passive faculty, is affected by frequent repetition, like the faculty of sensation. Habit dims the brightness of its pictures, and gradually effaces their colors. But so far as imagination is an active power, it receives an ever increasing energy, from frequent exercise, forming more rapid and extensive combinations, and seizing all the harmonious relations, which serve to create them.

The general phenomenon of the association of ideas, is only a habit contracted by an exercise which governs the memory. By collecting ideas together, according to the fortuitous order of succession, or simultaneousness, the relations of analogy between them are veiled.

Attention, and judgment, which is in some respects only extended attention, are eminently free and spontaneous faculties, and their efforts are more vigorous and independent, in proportion as they have the free and spontaneous action which they require.

Attention and judgment best discern the details of impressions and images, which, from frequent repetition, have lost part of their vividness.

In proportion to the strength of the principle of association of ideas, attention and judgment become powerless, and unskilful to separate and distinguish the links of the chain of thought and feeling! Then the chain, having unwound itself, habit takes the place of judgment, and governs it; and every ac-

cess to the analysis of reflection is closed. We believe without seeing, and in spite of ourselves.

That part of our affections, which depends upon received impressions, and upon the vividness of images, is subject also to being weakened, progressively, by habit. Certain affections, by the effect of habit, ceasing to be pleasures, become wants; and these wants become more imperious continually.

Personal feeling, in proportion as it indulges itself, becomes more exacting, more exclusive, more susceptible, and more importunate; it sees the number and violence of its necessities increase, without seeing the sphere of its happiness enlarge. Incorporating with itself the means it employed in its interests, it so identifies itself with them, as sometimes even to prefer them to those interests themselves. Generosity, on the contrary, becomes more expansive and free by exercise; freeing itself from all that is artificial. Its calmness increases with its activity, and its conscious happiness is rendered complete by continuity, which deadens everything else. The habitual practice of duties, helps reflection and the will.

Those duties, which prescribe the exact and constant repetition of uniform actions, receive in practice a new confirmation from habit; it is entirely the contrary with those, which prescribe various and new actions.

The love of excellence, an eminently free and spontaneous sentiment, acquires ever increasing energy from diligent meditation. The soul becomes more capable of governing itself, both in acting and in restraining itself, in resisting and conquering, by a series of continued and progressive efforts. In these few laws is comprised the whole history of the passions, and of the operations of the human mind.

First, we find in them the origin of the distinction between the arid, and the ardent passions; the former, like avarice, arise from mechanical habit, which stifles all sensibility; and the second, like love and anger, from an impulse of activity, which renders sensibility more energetic. We see why the

latter continue only as long as their objects present themselves surrounded by new circumstances that seem to renew them; and why, when these circumstances are wanting, the ardent passions become fixed and arid.

Secondly, in these laws, we also find, both the origin of prejudice and the source of discovery: the former arises from the blind routine in which mechanical habits engage the mind: the latter, from the free action of reason, gradually bringing forth activity.

Thirdly, in these laws we may admire the advantages of morality, that inexhaustible source of knowledge and activity, which makes the soul happy, by making it free, constantly renews its youth, and puts it in full possession of itself.

Finally, we may perceive by them, the essential difference between two kinds of education. One is founded only upon the outward repetition of the same processes, which, perhaps, give skill in practice, and inform the memory, but render us incapable of inventing or bringing to perfection, and which paralyse the combinations of the imagination, and the independence of the judgment: the other, on the contrary, going back to motives and principles, teaches us to do better, by rendering to ourselves an account of what we do; and to think better, by rendering to ourselves an account of what we know. The former is but the tradition of pedantry; the latter, the art of wisdom: one makes automata and trains animals; the other, animating and enlightening, forms men.

When reflecting upon the abovementioned phenomena, we observe that there are two kinds of exercises, and two kinds of acquired dispositions for man. There is a mechanical exercise, which consists in repeating the same acts after a certain model, without referring to the motives, which first induced them: and there is a reflective exercise, which grows and is nourished on the predetermining motives. There are then passive habits, which are nothing but the acquired faculty of producing the same actions, even in the absence of a

model, without the necessity of recurring to it: and there are active capacities, which cannot properly be called habits, by which we feel more vividly and see more clearly.

These two orders of acquired dispositions, appear directly contrary, and, at the first glance, we judge them incompatible; the one narrows, the other enlarges; the one imposes chains, the other procures liberty; the one prevents reflection and will, the other gives them spring; and, what is most remarkable of these two modes of exercise, the one has principally its seat in our external organs, the other in the soul itself; the one is principally subject to the conditions of our temperament, the other is dependent essentially on our intellectual and moral faculties. Thus, the soul and its organs, though strictly united, depend upon two systems of laws evidently different.

These two orders of acquired dispositions, moreover, if their natural relations are not inverted, give mutual aid: they are necessary to each other. The first is essentially conservative; the second may attain something new.

Study confides to the first kind of habits, the result of acquired knowledge, to be made use of when occasion requires; so that it may not be necessary constantly to go over the series of observations and reasonings which led to the knowledge. Virtue also may confide to this first order of habits, all acquired good qualities, for future use; for it is not necessary to be perpetually considering the foundations of the duty, of which these qualities are the living expression.

But the advantage of habit, whether we apply it to virtue or to study, consists in its being a conservative principle, so that we may forget what is behind, and apply our activity to new acquisitions. Here then is the art of progress; for by means of these admirable laws, man, although limited by his condition, becomes capable of elevating and exerting himself in an uninterrupted progression; by actual attainments, making himself capable of attaining more.

Here also is a manifest proof, that progress is the natural destination of man ; for these two dispositions, evidently instituted for each other, are combined to give him wealth ; the one constantly receiving, as a depository, what the other collects.

But all this beautiful and wise economy will be destroyed, if we fall into either of the following errors : if an exercise purely mechanical usurps the functions, which, in moral education, belong to the reflective exercise ; or if, satisfied with having acquired good habits, we neglect to give them new life continually, through a development of the active capacities. Besides, all the utility of habits is evidently subordinate to the primitive value of the deposite, the preservation of which has been confined to them. Habits, contracted by mechanical exercise, which is blind in its nature, receive indifferently, good or evil, truth or error. If, in this alternative, we have the happiness to meet the most favorable chance, yet we shall still not possess any but an unfruitful wealth ; in effect, we cannot employ a rule, as we can apply a principle ; we must always understand its sense and spirit :—the wisest precept, the most exact axiom, adopted without being comprehended, cannot be made to bend to a variety of circumstances, and it may even become a fatal instrument.

But habits, contracted by chance, may be formed under less happy chances ; and hence, those false associations of ideas, which attach the notion of virtue to actions which virtue would disown, and of which history and life show us the deplorable effects. Habit gives to these associations a singular tenacity, and, as it takes itself the form of an imperious necessity, so they assume the aspect of duties, and we obey them in good faith ; also, as habit becomes more strong by time, so they appear more sacred.

Thus our ideas become confused ; we do not know what belongs to routine, and what belongs to duty. More than one person has found himself embarrassed, in not being able to discern, in what presents itself under the image of an obligation,

that which really results from a moral law, and that which is but an association of ideas formed in infancy. This observation itself, true in some cases, but not to be generalized, has come in its turn, by another association of ideas, not less arbitrary and erroneous, to lead astray more than one philosopher; having served, in particular, as a pretext to sophists for contesting the reality of moral notions.

This is the origin of conventional virtues, which often take the place of the true, both by excluding the latter directly, and by absorbing the strength, which they should claim. This is the secret of the artifice, which power employs, when it wishes to convert might into right, producing submission by an appeal to habit, instead of to the sense of law. This is the source of those narrow views, which deny general observations, and at the same time, give an absolute character to relative and purely conditional rules. This is also one of the causes of that immoveable and cold fanaticism, which puts on the calmness and dignity of reason, because, in its false ideas of duty, habit has taken the place of enthusiasm. Finally, it is the principle of that disposition, which leads us to condemn those, who do otherwise than we are accustomed to do; and renders us the more intolerant, in proportion as we become less good and less wise.

Doubtless, when it has become a habit, knowledge ceases to be an act of the mind, virtue ceases to be a real merit. But originally, knowledge must have been an act of the mind, and virtue a merit: otherwise, the former is not knowledge, even when it recounts what is true, but a prejudice; and the second is only a happy quality, and not a title of esteem. Habit only serves to dispense with reviewing incessantly what we have once clearly perceived, or with renewing an effort for the observance of the same duty.

We repeat incessantly, that we ought to form good habits. Nothing is more true, but this is not saying enough; these habits should be founded on a good principle;—that is to say, upon an enlightened conviction, upon a reflective sentiment, with-

out which they would only constitute a kind of external regularity, and would not contribute to moral improvement. But this is not enough: even when the best habits have been contracted, it is also necessary to refer frequently to the principle, which has presided over their formation; and, as knowledge once acquired by memory, would become barren and dead, if it were not frequently restored to its primitive vigor by generating theorems, so also laudable qualities would grow dim by degrees, if they were not frequently reanimated by the vital warmth of moral sentiment. When not thus referred back to their origin, they are liable to be confounded, in their effects, with those blind habits, of which we have just spoken; they no longer lend themselves to the variety of applications and wants, arising out of new circumstances; they are found either too absolute, or totally insufficient.

In short, it would be renouncing the principal benefit to be expected from habits, to repose upon them and dispense with that internal activity, which should aspire incessantly to new acquisitions. The cultivation of intellect is checked, if we turn perpetually in the same circle of ideas: ideas obtained, ought to be unceasingly subjected to new developments, which call forth from them new relations. This continued internal labor adds to the clearness of the notions we possess, by rendering them fruitful; in proportion as it multiplies their number, it makes them more easily understood, establishing a more perfect consistency between them: as we know more, we know better. Moral cultivation is checked, also, if we neglect to offer to the love of excellence new aliment, and to self-government matter for new triumphs. When we repose upon the consciousness of good habits, we allow the inward powers, by which the soul acts and displays itself, to languish and become extinct. We keep up the appearance of action in the external world, but the internal life ceases; thus, this pretended fatal repose, is, in reality, going backward. On the contrary, when the love of excellence, and self-government, the active facul-

ties of the soul, maintain their footing by successive conquests, all acquired qualities receive from them new force and purity. For all rules, all motives of excellence, preserve strict analogy to each other, and are derived from a common source; and the further we advance, the more completely we seize the intimate relations which unite them.

Thus when we recommend exercise as the principal means of progress, it must be understood, that we are not only to exercise ourselves in acting, but in feeling and seeing also; that we are not only to repeat mechanically the same things, but to preserve the motives also, and to grow in strength and free will. In a word, it is the soul itself, which must be exercised in its most inward faculties.

Let us beware then of breaking up the natural harmony, which should exist between good habits and the impulse of progressive activity. Let us beware of wishing to subsist all our lives upon the acquisitions of a few years, and, after having begun as men, to live on as automata. He who would neglect to accept the assistance of habit, would fill incessantly the cask of the Danaïd: he would be, with regard to the practice of virtue, what a man without memory would be in regard to knowledge. Losing constantly what he acquires, having no past, binding nothing together by the spirit of connexion, he would be the sport of continued change; always beginning and never finishing. Shut up in his habits, as in a sort of fortress, and condemning himself to unfold nothing more of all that is hidden within, he would cease to relish, or even understand excellence. He would no longer *live*, in the true sense of the word; he would be a sort of moral petrification; he would preserve only the form of what he was. While everything around him would be renewing itself, he alone would stand still. Astonished to see himself surpassed by those, who do not share his lethargy, he would condemn progress itself, as a sort of rash innovation; he would be scandalized at improvements; we should see him deny the possibility of making ourselves better, smile disdainfully at the most

just and noble hopes, and think himself exempt from illusions, when he is in reality only the slave of his prejudices. We should see him systematically impose upon others the limits he has imposed upon himself; like a paralytic, who should pretend to deny men the faculty of motion. He might even attribute to himself a marked superiority over others; for we think ourselves great, when we do not perceive our limits.

Habit lends special aid to all the virtues, which imply fidelity and constancy. The exercise of the active faculties prepares an aid, not less powerful, to the virtues which demand a spontaneous effort, a kind of transport of soul. Moreover, all the virtues unite these two conditions, but in unequal proportions. Moral education will enable us to satisfy the demands of both.

There is a great, perpetual, and universal combat in society, as well as in each individual. It is the combat between the old and the new. It embraces ideas and sentiments, arts and institutions. It is the combat between habits and efforts, between repose and motion. We might say, that these two great forces, always present, play, in the moral world, the same part which is assigned by astronomers, in the planetary system, to gravitation and impulsion; but in the planetary system they produce a perfect equilibrium; therefore its order is never broken. Or we might say, that, as in external nature, there are two principles, one permanent, matter and its properties; the other always new and productive, motion;—principles which are combined in wonderful harmony: so in the combat between the old and the new, one of the two forces is armed for resistance, the other for attack; one invokes authority, the other enthusiasm; the former seems more faithful, the latter more generous; the one, guardian of stability, preserves; the other, mother of improvements, wishes to produce; the former, by repelling all change, would stop all progress; the latter, by hastening progress, would create all dangers; the first is as immovable as the second is presumptuous; the first is occupied

only in maintaining, as if nothing had begun; the second only in creating, as if nothing had existed. Let them be united, instead of being hostile to each other. Do we not feel the need of their mutual aid? By their union, what is old will unceasingly renew its youth, which is the only preservative against destruction; what is new will be engrafted upon this only solid foundation; everything will go on together in harmony. This great alliance will produce progress: in social order, it will be the union of customs and freedom: in science and the arts, it will be the union of experience with the spirit of invention: in morality, that of constancy and generosity. Behold, with what art, nature, in the first education of man, has combined these two rival powers! Hardly is he born, before habits are contracted; they go on multiplying daily; but, daily, new objects modify, bend and extend them, awakening and preserving internal activity. Let us continue the work of nature upon the same plan: let us watch over the origin of our habits, in order to contract salutary ones, and to form them only from mature reflection; let us watch over them also, when acquired, that they may not degenerate. But let us also turn to the future, and never cease to be young for truth and virtue. Borne upon a vast ocean, exposed to tempests, but called into port, memory shall be our anchor, hope our sail.

CHAPTER III.

CULTIVATION OF SENSIBILITY.

THE world commits the error of making morality consist in the natural affections; but philosophers, in their turn, sometimes commit the error of separating it from the affections, and, sometimes, even of sacrificing the latter altogether. But sen-

sibility, well directed, is a happy and gradual preparation for the exercise of duty, rendering it easier and more delightful, and above all, giving strength to accomplish it; for it is, as it were, the youth of the moral life. Sensibility is nourished by disinterestedness. It makes us practise it unconsciously; and it gives disinterestedness a singular charm, leading where duty would lead, without the notion, or indeed the merit of it; for it is the dawn of that love, which alone deserves the name. The art of cultivating sensibility, and of directing it aright, is, therefore, an essential part of our early internal education.

Undoubtedly this beautiful faculty is a gift of nature, and nature has distributed it unequally among men. At the same time, there are none of us, who have been disinherited of this treasure of the heart. Those, who appear to have been left in indigence, have too often impoverished themselves, by neglecting or dissipating their patrimony. Sensibility sometimes appears enfeebled by age and experience, although they should only enlighten it; and it is often checked by society, which, under many relations, should give it support. But we have more part, than we are aware of, in the evil caused; and we should first of all suspect ourselves, our own frivolity and imprudence.

Two principal causes debase, and progressively destroy, this delightful power of the heart, and prevent it from unfolding. One has its origin without, the other within. The first is the distraction, which springs from living in all kinds of external tumult, by which we are carried from object to object, without being permitted to fix upon anything; which, agitating us without relaxation, prevents us from living with ourselves. And the other is that restless, reflective, ambitious, personal feeling, which takes the forms of pride, vanity and self-love. The first cause dissipates sensibility, the other dries up its source.

Sensibility is a principle hidden in the depths of the heart, which only comes to light in the calmness of self-recollection. It must fold itself up, and feed on its own emotions: hence it de-

lights in retreat and silence. It is a delicate plant, which must grow apart, and in the shade ; an exquisite and sweet perfume, which rapidly evaporates, if exposed to the open air. In the scenery of nature, as in the productions of the arts, sensibility seeks sweet and sombre coloring, undulating and far reaching lines. It seeks mysterious recesses, which seem to open it an asylum. It has secret melodies, which can be heard only by the most attentive ear. Nothing protects it better than grave and serious thoughts. It cannot attend to many objects at once. It cannot pass rapidly from one object to another. It attaches itself the more, the longer it has been attached.

The preoccupation of business is often more fatal to sensibility than the dissipation of frivolity. The dissipation of frivolity has a limit, and sometimes the heart finds itself again, and experiences a sort of surprise and joy, which restores to it a new life. But the preoccupation of that which we call business, is nothing but a habit of being absorbed in material interests ; it places us face to face with men in the attitude of defence ; it leads constantly to the distinctions of *thine* and *mine*. In the transactions, which compose business, each stipulates to acquire ; while in the commerce of the affections all are occupied with giving. Besides, sensibility generally avoids all that has the appearance of calculation ; and repulses that, which is too determinate and precise. It fears to encounter shackles, or even to perceive them, seeing in them a restraint upon its liberty, an obstacle to that forgetfulness of self, that confidence in which it delights. It is disconcerted by the rigor of methods, by the clearness of definitions. It needs a sort of vagueness and mystery : it would wander freely : it cannot be a captive. We know how deep is the taint, which sensuality carries to the sensibility of the soul ; the injury is the greater, as the pleasures are more material and gross in their character. Man seems to lose, in this sort of excess, the consciousness of his inward life. This kind of intoxication leads to the sleep of the heart, as well as that of reason. However, if these

wanderings do not lead to absolute degradation, the selfishness of the senses is less fatal to sensibility, than the selfishness of ambitious pretensions. Though it seldom happens, that we give ourselves up to sensual pleasures, when the soul is full of lively and tender affections; there is, sometimes, in the sort of hilarity and personal enjoyment, which these pleasures procure, a disposition favorable to confidence and self-forgetfulness, and even to generosity. But pride, vanity and self-love, shut up the heart every way, and do not permit to it any expansion. They keep it in a constant state of hostility, of suspicion and of the disposition to invade. Pride introduces distance, where sensibility would bring together.

Pride would govern, where sensibility would please. Vanity demands distinctions, but sensibility requires that kind of equality, which alone gives rise to confidence. Vanity seeks applause; sensibility fears admiration, lest it should take away from love. Self-love troubles the social relations by its susceptibilities and its claims; sensibility has need, above all things, of security in these relations. Pride loves to protect; vanity loves to show itself powerful; both, therefore, sometimes take pleasure in conferring, because in that they affect a sort of superiority; but their favors bear the impress of ostentation. Sensibility can accept protection, when necessary: it knows how to enjoy receiving; and bears joyfully the debt of gratitude, blessing the hand which has conferred the benefit. When it confers, it is ignorant of its generosity, so natural is the impulse. Self-love may be ambitious of pleasing; sensibility would do more; it gives consolation, and is eager to make others enjoy. But the most exquisite pleasure upon earth, that of feeling one's self beloved, may be poisoned by self-love. Pride is disdainful, while sensibility takes pleasure in setting forth and honoring the object of its affections. Sensibility of heart is developed only in proportion as we forget ourselves, by accustoming ourselves to exist in others; but there is no more active, more ingenious, more persevering, more universal self-

seeking, than that of which vanity is the moving principle. Self-love is an enemy, dangerous to sensibility, because it disguises itself when it seduces, and insinuates itself near the heart, seeming to associate itself with its interests.

If we succeed in removing from ourselves these two obstacles, distraction from without, and self-seeking from within, sensibility may then come to light; and the discipline proper to second it, will be much more simple than we may be led to think; for there is no art which can give sensibility. The very efforts, which might be made to excite it, would be dangerous: we should act upon the imagination more than upon the heart, and only deceive ourselves. Emotions, which we compose and command for ourselves, are neither useful, profound, nor stable. They paralyse ingenuous emotions. If the education of this faculty of the soul is an art, the true art will consist here, as in so many other things, in only observing and following the indications of nature, which, rightly understood, are always the voice of Providence. It is plain, for example, that Providence wills to keep us during early youth in the bosom of our family, as in the abode where this great education may in the best manner commence. But it is not, as we suppose, for children alone, that this school is open. There, the education of parents must continue, and that of the aged must end; all parties in turn drawing forth abundant instruction. The family is for all a school, where we may learn every day, what we ought to learn all our lives; where we may learn to *love*; where we may learn it so much the better, as we are called upon to show ourselves more generous, and to taste the happiness of conferring. It is there we obtain the touching privilege of living for others, and of entirely forgetting ourselves. It is therefore in the bosom of the domestic affections, that sensibility seems destined to receive its birth, to grow and to strengthen. We may, with some foundation, suspect those exalted sentiments, which certain persons affect beyond their own sphere, but which they cannot diffuse at home. Hence

also, we often remark, that sensibility withers or takes a wrong direction, with those whom circumstances have deprived of the happiness of their natural relations.

In general, we preserve this precious faculty of the heart only in proportion as we cultivate truth, and guard against all that is exaggerated, affected, or factitious. The superficial spectator is often deceived. We are often deceived with regard to ourselves, having much more real sensibility than appears, or than we are sensible of, merely because it has followed its regular course, and produces no extraordinary and irregular explosions. There are people who mourn over the excess of their own sensibility, when perhaps they ought really to be afflicted for not knowing how to love.

Hence arises undoubtedly the secret sympathy, which minds of sensibility feel for nature; especially for the contemplation of the works of creation. Nature, by all the various productions with which she has peopled our dwelling place, has formed a peculiar, and eloquent, though silent language, which addresses, awakens, and preserves our affections. Her thousand shades of coloring, her thousand perfumes, her thousand forms, her motions, which appear spontaneous; the combinations of these, and their succession, are all so many expressions, by which she seems to compassionate our sorrows, smile upon our joys, and invite our tenderness and confidence. And these expressions are so faithful, that we, in our turn, borrow them to supply the barrenness of our language. It seems as if we imagined a vast theatre, upon which is represented, in a sort of wonderful pantomime, the great drama of human affections. Here grief seems to sigh, there, hope to brighten; here generosity seems to bloom, there, delicacy to veil herself from all eyes here, reciprocal attractions answer to each other, by a sort of sympathy; there, tributes are offered in worship, while all around is serenity and silence, those safeguards of pure sentiments, and truth and ingenuousness, which alone can give to sentiment, sincerity and candor.

Such is nature, and to this refuge the tender heart, when painfully deceived in its intercourse with men, may come in safety, for it is always open, it is always a faithful friend. Souls, united by celestial affection, are able to enter this sanctuary, and to find in it a witness, which seems to sympathize with their happiness. Moreover, and this deserves to be particularly remarked, there is in the contemplation of nature, something, which, unfolding sensibility, makes it serve its greatest purpose; that is to say, our moral education; for how can we fail to be directed towards the thoughts of virtue, by those images of perfect, though hidden order, which are produced in the grand whole, and in the most minute details, sometimes with imposing majesty, sometimes with enchanting grace; by this spectacle of a kingdom, ruled by wise and powerful laws, where all obey without effort, and, through obedience, produce harmony and excellence; by these contrasts of change and steadiness, of agitation and repose, of birth and destruction and resurrection, of the infinitely great, and of the infinitely little—contrasts which appear so well to paint the secrets of our destiny; by the brilliant testimonies of the immense wisdom, which presides over the universal system of being; and lastly, by that peace, so favorable to the meditations of the heart, and that ineffable simplicity, which reduces to nothingness the display of human vanities!

Is our treatment of animals without influence upon the habits of our character? This question has for some time excited, and deserves, indeed, serious attention.

The absurd hypothesis of the Cartesians cannot be supported, in presence of so many manifest signs, which announce, in those unknown beings (separated from us by a thick barrier, but endowed with organs similar to our own), a principle of sensibility, and a dawning of intelligence. And it is impossible for a man to accustom himself to see the sufferings of sentient beings, though invested with a different form, without becoming less compassionate for the sufferings of his fellow mor-

tals. This danger will become much more serious, if he accustom himself to make them suffer; especially if he goes so far as to take any sort of pleasure in their sufferings; for the principle of sympathy will be necessarily destroyed by it; and, if sympathy is not sensibility of heart, in all its purity, it is at least its prelude and auxiliary. Can we consent to create pain upon earth gratuitously? What have the unfortunate beings done to us, upon whom we exercise this power? Do we ever torment those, who lend us their services with docility, and almost with eagerness; who seem even to share our pleasures, and to seek with us the relations of a singular affection? O should not the mystery, which veils their existence from us, command in us a sort of reserve, or at least of timidity? However, let us also beware; there is a contrary exaggeration to be avoided. If cruelty towards animals can harden the heart, there is often, in the impressions received from the sight of their sufferings, more of that organic sensibility, which the signs of pain excite, than of those true emotions of the soul, which alone constitute the affections.

The unknown beings, which breathe in the animal creation, whatever their nature may be, are too far from us, too much below us, for our sensibility not to be profaned by admitting them to a commerce of those affections, which must always have a moral character. Sensibility has a certain dignity to preserve, in order to fulfil its vocation.

There is a second condition not less essential to the culture of sensibility, and which refers to it still more particularly. This consists in directing our affections towards objects, which truly deserve to inspire and captivate them. When wandering at hazard, they are exposed to mistakes, or contract a fatal restlessness; but on the contrary, when founded upon reason and justice, they will become more strong and durable. And this general observation may have two applications; our affections may be claimed as a homage, and they may be invoked as an assistance.

Happy are those, who, in the beings to whom they are bound by the ties of nature, find models, and who can thus join the sentiment of veneration to the instincts of tenderness! What love is this, mingled with admiration and blending with the very culture of virtue! Happier still are those, who by offering examples of a good life to the beings whom nature has placed under their protection, can thus confer upon them the greatest of all benefits, by giving to their hearts the most useful instructions, and offering to their affections the most lawful titles. How constantly should attention to this be observed in the ties, which are of our own choosing! Over these intimate relations should preside a wise reserve and an enlightened discernment. We complain incessantly of having been deceived in our sentiments. Ought we not rather to accuse ourselves of having been imprudent and blind in the relations we have contracted? This is not all: it is not given to us to find around us perfect beings; habitual intercourse makes us gradually perceive the imperfections even of the best. Lest these discoveries should surprise and chill us, lest the freshness of sentiment should thus decay, —there is a sort of delicate care to be taken in observing the objects of our affections, in order that they may not be deprived of their coloring, by the impressions which familiarity tends to produce; we should veil from our own eyes what is least distinguished in them: we should preserve unsullied the sentiment which honors them; for we truly love only what we can recognise as honorable.

What more terrible enemy, then, on the theatre of society, can sensibility encounter, than that caustic spirit, which is eager to disenchant and overthrow everything? What more fatal influence can there be for it, than the sight of that cruel play of mind, in which malignant frivolity takes pleasure in violating the respect due to goodness of heart, and in pursuing candor with the arrows of irony? How can sensibility dare to appear where the art of aspersing, in elegant disguise, wears the appearance of grace, and is celebrated as a thing of good taste, and becomes a condition of success in society?

Just pride fears to incur debts of gratitude too lightly. Just delicacy shrinks from incurring them from those it cannot esteem, or with whom it can preserve only fugitive relations. Self-love also frequently repulses an obligation which humbles it ; and emptiness of heart refuses to promise what it has not the means of performing. But there are benefits, which it is not in our power to reject, and which have even anticipated us before any reflection on our part. There is sometimes an exquisite delicacy, which requires us to accept ; and sensibility takes pleasure in receiving, in the most intimate intercourse of affection ; thereby offering a more perfect pledge of love. He who accepts, loves. Gratitude, born under such auspices, becomes the instructor and protector of sensibility. It gives to the affections the character of a sacred debt. It elevates in our eyes those whom it makes us love ; it disposes us to respect others ; it feeds on memory ; it is the fidelity of the heart ; it takes selfishness captive, as it were, to love, and obliges it to render homage. Gratitude also has a sort of generosity, which is peculiar to it ; this is the very sacrifice it imposes upon self-love. Let us rejoice, then, that our destiny in life called us to receive, in infancy and youth, so long a train of benefits. It is because gratitude was given us to preside over the education of our sensibility. Let us rejoice, in old age, to find ourselves dependent upon the services of others. Gratitude will thus again warm the heart to sensibility in the evening of life. We have need of others from the cradle to the grave, because love should occupy the avenues and the issues of life. What is it to live, if it is not to love ?

Besides the affections, which carry us to those above us, there are others, which are directed towards those who solicit our aid ; for it is by this kind of exchange, by this double direction of sensibility, that those gradual ties are formed, which preserve life in human society. Pity is useful to those, to whose relief it comes : it is still more so, perhaps, to those who relieve. To the latter it teaches tenderness ; revealing to them

all that is sacred in the ties which unite us to our brethren ; introducing them into the sanctuary of humanity. But the pity, which has this influence, is not disdainful : it is a pity, which is mingled with just respect for misfortune : it is not that which seeks relief by flying from the sight of suffering : it is that which feels the need of drying up its sources. How easy it is to love those whom we can indeed serve ! What new faculties we discover in ourselves, when unexpected opportunities of self-devotion offer, and when we afterwards taste the overwhelming joy of having been able to shed around us relief or happiness ! Even the warrior, so terrible in combat, when oppressed innocence invokes his support, is not only moved but softened, and the most delicate emotions of his soul are brought to light.

This leads us to a third condition of sensibility. It is the activity of benevolence ; and we here take benevolence in the most general sense, as that which brings real benefit to other men. Sometimes, sensibility, self-deluded, seems to take pleasure in voluptuous repose. This state of prolonged repose has a deceitful attraction for it : it would soon exhaust and consume itself by the abuse of solitary pleasures. It needs action for its food, as well as experience for its regulator. When benevolence becomes beneficence, sensibility learns to personify and particularize its emotions, and to give them a determined object. It feeds upon the same things, which seem to satisfy it. It is encouraged by the rewards it receives. He who devotes himself to others, learns to love still better ; for then only can he know all the bliss of loving. Sensibility is made perfect through beneficence, because in that, it fulfils its true destination, defending itself from the sombre melancholy, which consumes it when inactive, and preventing the dangers, to which a thirst for the vague and the indefinite exposes it. The sensibility of beneficence, incessantly finding around it new objects, which invoke and respond to it, is reanimated, every instant, with new life ; in short, if it experiences disappointment, instead of the affection which it hoped for, it has always an ad-

vantage, which is subject to no mistake, the memory of good done to others.

Memory and hope are the two great levers, which act upon the development of sensibility, with an almost equal power, but in a different manner.

Although memory is partly an organic phenomenon, the reminiscence consequent upon it, is an intellectual and moral phenomenon of great interest. There is nothing more grave and serious in itself, than the return towards the past which is no more. It puts us in presence of the future : it teaches us at once, both the changeableness and permanence of our being : it recalls to us our weakness and our dignity : it leads us to enter into the high mysteries of existence. Self, which appears and is recognised in the distance of time, is astonished and affected to find itself there. Around this ancient self, revive the objects of affection, all the old companions of life ; but they rise surrounded by an unknown charm. There is something tender and solemn in this meeting. We feel, that, amid the rapid and variable course of circumstances, there are still indestructible ties. The cultivation of recollection, then, opens abundant sources to sensibility. It consecrates the images of the absent : it gives a religious coloring to the affections of the heart : it places them under the safeguard of fidelity, and by this fidelity communicates to them a singular purity and elevation. It is remarkable for being by nature eminently disinterested ; for it can satisfy no ambition ; it can acquit only the debts of the heart. But when, filled with regrets, memory concentrates the soul upon itself, it tends to throw it into a sort of languor, it surrounds it with a cloud of melancholy, and, if it were not sustained by virtue, it would sometimes be carried away by despair ; if it were not fed by virtue, at other times, it might also be annihilated. Memory becomes weakened by time ; but time gives to memory, when it can survive it, an ever increasing charm. It thus prolongs that glance, which the soul throws upon the past, and thereby imparts something more

majestic and august to the objects it discovers, and gives a greater value to the constancy of the affections, with which it continues to honor them.

The future, also, has its prospects and its mysteries, and some, which have still more extent and depth. The past is limited, determined, definite; the future is unknown, and seems without bounds. The past is decided, immutable, out of our power: the future seems to belong to us; it belongs to us, at least, in all which is subject to free will. From the bosom of the future, seem to issue a thousand voices, which respond to our affections. They are so many echoes, which repeat to the heart its own invocations and aspirations. What continued emotions this concert preserves and renews without ceasing! Hope adorns at will the objects of the affections. It invests them with a vagueness, which embellishes them still more. It lends them another attraction, by the very distance, at which it keeps them, and by our impatience to possess them. It is not, as yet, cooled by possession, or disenchanted by experience. Hope is expansive, like love. It animates love by confidence. It is serene, joyous, radiant. It triumphs beforehand. It communicates to the affections the impulse by which it is inspired. The future has its terrors, however, as well as its hopes; and hope, the daughter of imagination, accompanies the capricious power from which it springs, in its wanderings, and suffers from its mistakes. And, if imagination has nourished sensibility by flattering it, so it may, by deceiving, destroy it. Hope, also, opens to selfishness the same career, as to generosity and affection; and, therefore, may be seduced and corrupted.

The presence of novelty is a signal to man, of hope and fear. The more unknown is the situation, the more free is the imagination to fill it with anticipations, which may smile upon, or terrify him. Placed thus between the old and the new, man, when he dwells too long upon any one object, may, according to its nature, become discouraged, or abandon him-

self to presumption. Providence has granted him these two points of view, that their contrary influences may temper each other. The cultivation of sensibility will receive from their concurrence the most favorable assistance. There is nothing, which excites in the soul more powerful emotions than the wakening of an old recollection, when, after a long interruption, it is suddenly revived by new circumstances. Then the two great movers of human sensibility act at once, uniting and combining their forces. All the power of memory is found united with all the magic of hope. The soul, extending itself on all sides, seems to seize upon the future and the past. But the future has no longer deceitful illusions, since it presents itself as a reflection of experience. The past is no longer full of regret, because it has become present again. This rare and wonderful combination of effect is sometimes offered, to the exile, when, on his return, he prostrates himself upon his native shore; and sometimes has been offered to a whole people, by those great political revolutions, which have either restored princes who were dear, or institutions which were sacred. Such happiness can only be tasted upon earth momentarily; but doubtless awaits the virtuous on the threshold of immortality. The very nature of things does not permit these uncommon occurrences to produce a lasting effect. But it depends somewhat upon ourselves to render them more frequent. Let us put our hopes under the protection of experience; let us nourish the reminiscences of the heart, by legitimate and reasonable expectations of promised reunion; in other words, let us confide in the virtue of these two great levers. This faith will bring them into harmony. What is virtue itself, but an ever enduring hope, dwelling amidst the most constant recollections? For it is always old and always new; old in its immutable rules, new in acts of self-devotion. It carries the soul back to its origin, and unveils to it the future. It renews its youth incessantly by the creations it requires, and the rewards which it promises.

Independently of the causes which may develope sensibility,

there are some which contribute especially to preserve it. In the number of the latter, we should particularly point out fidelity to the affections, and habits of respect.

In referring to the considerations laid down in the preceding chapter, we perceive how generous sentiments are fortified by exercise, feeding, as it were, upon themselves. Thus, they follow a law, entirely the reverse of that which regulates organic sensibility. If men, changeable in their affections, think that they have real affection, they make a mistake; they take the impulses of the imagination for the emotions of the soul. In changing objects, sensibility seems to condemn itself. It secretly contradicts itself; it contracts something of caprice. Fidelity is the integrity of sentiments, which, elevating them to the dignity of virtue, imparts to them something more pure. Let us beware of that wild sensibility, which lavishes itself in demonstrations; and dwell in that, which resides in the bottom of the heart, and which gives life to those we love.

Habits of respect give collectedness; they aid reflection; they diffuse calmness, and restore order to the inward world. Respect for other men, so far as it is due to them, respect for self, respect for truth, and for the laws of duty, protect all sincere and deep emotions. The sentiment of respect prevents that frivolity, which is the most common enemy of sensibility; it surrounds the soul with a rampart against a crowd of distractions. It favors self-communion; it gives to this communion dignity and seriousness. Ask the affectionate and tender if they do not take pleasure in respecting the object of their affections? And what would become of the delicacy of sentiment, if this veil were torn away?

CHAPTER IV.

MEDITATION.

MEDITATION is the great and universal teacher of man. Alone imparting the light of theory, it presides over all the creations of genius, discovering science, and guiding all the applications in art. But meditation performs a still more important part in our moral education; for in this last function it sheds the fullest light, putting man in possession of all his faculties, and elevating him to all the dignity of his nature. In the arts and sciences, meditation can only elaborate the elementary facts furnished by observation. In the work of our moral education, its end is also to make us explore our own nature, in order to gather from it the elementary facts, which will reveal to us the laws of duty and initiate us into the knowledge of ourselves. In the arts and sciences, meditation operates only on the ideas of the intellect. In the work of our moral education, meditation is also called upon to excite the feelings, which should be associated with the idea of excellence, or rather, which flow from it; and animates us to put it into execution. Meditation is the soul of wisdom; but, if meditation presents many difficulties in study, and is familiar only to so small a number of minds, access to it, is, on some accounts, less easy and still less common in morals. For the exercises of study are supported by different orders of sensible signs, or nomenclatures; but in the sphere of morals, this external aid is wanting. Thought remains entirely abandoned to itself, can only feed upon its own fruits, and sustain itself by its own strength.

There is, as we have said, in morality, both an idea and feeling: the idea enlightens the intellect, the feeling governs the will; but the feeling flows from the idea clearly conceived.

Such is the imposing authority with which God has invested the law of duty, that in proportion as it is offered to our minds simple, and free from all that is factitious, it exercises over us certain and absolute authority. But this idea of duty we may seek in vain, in the world without; we can only find its reflection there. It resides in ourselves, in the deep sanctuary of consciousness. But it is not enough, that the idea of duty shows itself; we should take pains to discover and observe it. Ignorance and inattention cover it with a veil. When we are unfaithful to the law of duty, it is not, that we have an intention of violating it, but that we have neglected to study it. And far from doing evil for evil's sake, it would be almost impossible for us to resist the attraction of excellence, if we saw it in all its resplendence.

It is not enough, however, to glance upon this model. We must dwell upon it a long time. It is necessary, that its influence should be gradually shed upon the soul, penetrate its deep recesses, take possession of and occupy it entirely. Such is the end which the art of meditation proposes. It is therefore the first and most powerful of arts, since it alone can give man the enjoyment of the highest faculties with which the Creator has endowed him, and since it alone gives to intellect the character of a cause.

Struck with the importance and fruitfulness of this great art, philosophic and ascetic writers have vied with each other, in their endeavours to trace its precepts; and we are indebted to them for a great number of useful counsels upon a subject, on which such counsels are necessary. Yet the art of meditation has shared the fate of all other arts, when overwhelmed by the weight of didactic rules; it has been embarrassed by recommendations equally useless, both to those who are capable of acting for themselves, and to those who are not. For these recommendations tell the first of what they would do themselves, and advise the second to what they are incapable of doing. It has been loaded with almost mechanical processes, which, by

effleavoured to render its operations more easy, take from them the true principle of action.

Thus, it has been thought necessary to choose a subject, determine it, circumscribe it, divide it. Time and place have been assigned for action and repose, for considerations and sentiments. The very moments for reflection and emotion have been pointed out. Maps have been drawn, methods prescribed, formulas composed. Thus the exercise of the moral and intellectual faculties has been rigorously subjected to a routine in which everything has been arranged beforehand. It has not been considered, that these faculties, in order to fulfil their functions well, must preserve a certain degree of independence. It has been too much forgotten, that the first and most useful counsel for meditation consists in recommending that energy and freedom of mind, which permits the soul to appropriate to itself the truths it meditates upon, having drawn them from its own depths.

In effect, what is most difficult in the exercises of meditation is,—not to meditate after having begun, but to find, in the first instance, and to penetrate the region of meditation. Its access is so difficult, that it terrifies those who attempt it, and this circumstance explains to us why the art of meditation is practised by so few. When we first wish to give ourselves up to it, we feel repelled, as it were, on all sides. First a thousand recollections assail us in the retreat where we have sought refuge. The changeable and capricious phantoms of distant events return and trouble us more than the objects themselves did, when they were present, hovering around us in a thousand forms. Do we succeed in quieting this tumult, a second trial not less painful awaits us. It is silence, obscurity, a void. Instead of those fertile regions we hoped to visit joyfully, we discover only a barren desert. In vain do we invoke the celestial images, which we thought would enrapture us. They fly from us; we fall back upon ourselves, overwhelmed with the weight of *ennui*. We see within us only the horrors of a vast

solitude. Do we make another and a last effort? The darkness seems to disappear, and our ideas to revive; but they rise confused, incoherent, and disordered. They escape when we expect to seize them. They hurry, crowd and strike against each other, and perhaps plunge us into the worst trial of all, the trial of uncertainty and doubt. It is only when we have courage to overcome these three classes of difficulties, that we at last attain that luminous and peaceful sphere, where all the fruits and all the pleasures of meditation await us. But before we attain it, how often are we discouraged. We renounce the attempt, we declare that success is impossible. It is of primary importance, then, to facilitate the access to the regions to which meditation calls us. It may be done by suitable preparation, and all the cares this preparation demands are comprised in self-recollection. Self-recollection does not consist exclusively, as some mystics have thought, in that isolation, which frees the soul from all external distraction. It demands, however, especially, that the soul should collect all its forces, and dispose of them with sovereign power. The presence of certain external objects will sometimes strengthen rather than weaken this energetic act; as also, in the absence of every external object, the soul might remain plunged in lethargic indolence. Self-recollection is a state of inward liberty, at once active and peaceful, because it is well regulated. But we do not attain this state at will, or instantaneously. The very faculty of enjoying it, is a prerogative, purchased by a long novitiate, and it is on this point, that inexperienced persons are deceived, who present themselves at the gate of the sanctuary, confident of being immediately admitted. Neophytes of a day, they are astonished not to obtain initiation; but they must begin by rendering themselves worthy of it. This necessary novitiate consists in a good plan of life; in observing order, regularity and sobriety in all things, and especially in the habit of self-vigilance.

There is, then, a long and distant, as well as a near and im-

mediate preparation for meditation. The latter may be aided by a concurrence of external circumstances, such as silence and retirement. Certain places and hours are more particularly favorable. But the places suited to it are those most in harmony with our mental habits and dispositions: such are those which inspire calmness, and which, at the same time, excite uniform and serious impressions. The hours, which are suited to it, are those, in which the soul, yet free from all communion with external objects, enjoys all its vigor and possesses itself; and even, when having been interrupted in this communion and returning to itself, it can resume its newly acquired experience. Yet the influence of these different circumstances is modified according to individual character. There are some who need a more absolute isolation, and whose meditations never have more strength than in the profound solitude of night. There are others, on the contrary, whose thoughts must be sustained by the presence of a spectacle analogous to their subjects of meditation; as a weak and timid voice must be accompanied by the harmony of instruments. Yet we should try not to be dependent upon these accessories, which are not always in our power. Let us gradually habituate ourselves to preserve our liberty entire, amidst the tumult of the world, and material occupations. By surrounding ourselves with facilities for attaining this power of self-recollection, we become much more exposed to feel the effects of the distraction which may occur. Besides, by multiplying precautions of this kind, by shutting ourselves up in absolute isolation, by too strongly concentrating ourselves upon ourselves, we are exposed to be carried away in vague reveries, or in the excess of an exaltation, which we cannot moderate, because we cannot perceive it ourselves. And all this preparation of external precaution is of little aid to those, who know not how to obtain from within the proper preparation. Moreover, these precautions themselves will often seem only to increase the trouble, if the soul retains in itself a focus of agitations. It is in solitude that the violent

passions are sometimes nourished. It was an army of anchorites, that, issuing from the desert, brought disorder upon the empire of Byzantium.

It is in the very sanctuary of thought, that the law of silence must be especially observed. There, all objects should be disposed in regular harmony ; there, freedom should be entire ; there, meditation should be protected, at once by the most serious and the most gentle images. If we have once succeeded, by these precautions and this care, in becoming capable of this noble exercise, we shall know enough of the art of meditation, or rather we shall learn the rest ourselves. Perhaps we shall feel unexpected inspirations, and much more luminous than all foreign counsels. Let us trust them, and afterwards consult our own experience.

The first thing which this experience will teach, is, that it is not necessary to fruitful meditations, to torment or harass the mind by too multiplied efforts. Meditation is the mother of strong thought and profound sentiment ; but both must spring from our souls naturally. We must favor their spring, which agitation and constraint would arrest. The more spontaneous, the more energetic they will be. The art of governing our understanding does not consist in oppression and violence, but in a wise and calm direction. Moral meditation is the soul communing with itself. It questions itself, and then must await and ponder the answer. In questioning itself, it must preserve perfect good faith ; it must avoid imposing upon itself a false answer. We only understand what we have a sincere desire to know. All men have in themselves nearly the same fund of primitive ideas. They have, especially, the same moral fund. The difference, which arises between them, comes from the fact, that some know how to improve, while others neglect that fund. Those uneasy convulsions of mind, interrupting meditation while endeavouring to aid it, more usually take possession of those who are beginning. There is nothing more difficult to comprehend, than what it is which constitutes a calm

activity, because there is nothing more rare than to know how to restrain one's self in the midst of emotion. We pass from sleep to agitation, and fall back from agitation to sleep. Impatience to succeed, makes us fail in the right means of success.

There is no fruitful meditation without method ; and in moral meditation this method is more necessary, because thought cannot be supported from without, and because internal agitation tends incessantly to produce vagueness and incoherence. This method, however, should not have the rigor and precision of scientific processes. It would then have their dryness. It must be natural and simple, to leave reflection and the impulses of the heart free. It will consist, at first, in disentangling the chaos, in which ideas are confounded, in order to begin to distinguish and distribute them. It must especially prescribe the end of meditation itself, and, if this is clearly conceived, views will naturally arise from it in abundance ; just as in geometry when the position of the problem is well established, the means of solution rush in upon the path that is opened. Method leads to the discovery of those *mother* thoughts which bear in their bosoms numerous germs, aiding us to seize all relations, and assigning to every consideration its rank ; bringing back to unity those scattered notions, which are floating in the intellect ; assigning to them a determined place ; enlightening them by each other, and deducing from them useful consequences. One of the greatest dangers, to which we are exposed in the exercises of meditation, is to see them degenerate into a vague and idle reverie. A voluptuous effeminacy of soul then takes the place of the regular work of reflection. We no longer meditate, we forget ourselves ; we sleep ; perhaps we go astray in a false exaltation. Abysses may then open under our feet. Whence comes this danger ? It is from our having allowed confusion, anarchy, and disorder to be introduced into these exercises.

These results, doubtless, will not be obtained in an instant,

or on the first trial : there will be some irregularity in the success obtained, according to the momentary and uncontrollable dispositions which we carry into these secret operations. It will be, then, especially necessary to persevere ; and this, we believe, is the third lesson we receive from experience. Perseverance will gradually lead to light and liberty. We must learn how to dwell upon one point of view for a suitable length of time, in order to unravel all it contains. Sterility of mind is most frequently only the consequence of precipitation. In moral meditations, the repose which accompanies this perseverance is also the condition necessary, in order that the sentiments which flow from reason may be diffused in the heart. These sentiments require a certain interval of peaceful contemplation, in the same manner as admiration requires repose, that we may enjoy the masterpieces of the fine arts. The soul requires some leisure to collect the emanations of the good and true, that it may taste and feed upon them, and transform them into its own substance. It even ought to avoid accumulating them fast, that each one may be suitably enjoyed, and that it may in its developement acquire all the fruitfulness which belongs to it.

In short, in order that the most abundant and most wisely directed meditation may bear its fruits, it must be suitably summed up and converted into simple results, which may remain fixed in the mind, and be applied. Method, if it preside over these exercises, will render this last operation easy. But what will especially facilitate it, is the habit of diligently applying the fruits of meditation. Contemplation and action sometimes present themselves as two rivals, who dispute the possession of the moral man. The first finds zealous partisans among mystics, the second, among the friends of humanity ; but to operate well, each of these two powers has need of the assistance of the other ; they fortify and regulate each other, by their alliance. They mutually prepare for, correct and test each other. The contemplation of moral truths, if it should remain sterile and

idle, would condemn and belie itself. It ought not to give to virtue voluptuous sybarites, but courageous wrestlers : understood rightly, it would convert itself into practical applications. It thirsts for good actions, and inspires the strength which they require. It delights to realize the images which it has dwelt upon with rapture.

On the other hand, practice becomes, through moral meditation, what experience and observation are to the theories of the physical sciences, controlling, determining, and circumscribing what had only been conceived perhaps in a vague and incomplete manner ; calming the imagination, by constraining and regulating its movements ; preventing or correcting the wanderings, which are sometimes so grave and fatal, of an exaltation which was in its origin, perhaps, innocent ; alone enabling us to know, whether, in the contemplations that have given us so much delight, truths and sentiments have really penetrated the depth of our soul, and struck root. Nothing can so well remedy the diseases of the heart, and prevent the access of a sombre, discouraging melancholy, as the practice of duty. We often find ourselves incapable of thinking and feeling. Let us then act ; let us do good, and our sleeping faculties will awake, full of vigor. There are, besides, in the notions of duty, conditions, which can only be well comprehended by those who have tried to accomplish it. It is upon the solid ground of practice, that we measure difficulties, discover obstacles, and learn the strength and force of motives. By this we succeed in knowing ourselves well, for in this we are proved, and also we find preservatives against illusions of vanity, which too often are favored by contemplative habits. After having done good, we return to the study of the laws of excellence with new ardor ; we bring to meditation greater serenity, and reap from it the suffrages of conscience. It is remarkable, that he, who is engaged in vice, perseveres in it, because he has blinded himself ; but he, who is engaged in virtue, perseveres in it, because he becomes more enlightened. He, who perseveres in

vice, often mourns for it, and disapproves his own weakness; yet yields as if carried away by a mechanical and foreign force. He, who perseveres in virtue always loves it more, and congratulates himself continually for having chosen the good part. The chains of the former multiply and increase in weight; the latter gradually obtains a more perfect liberty.

If we reflect upon the nature of the obstacles, which remove so great a number of men from moral meditation, we shall perceive, that these obstacles do not proceed, as in scientific and philosophical meditations, from the nature of things; but from their own negligence and frivolity. Moral notions are not like the speculations of Science, composed of those abstract deductions and vast combinations which exceed the reach of ordinary minds. They are near, familiar, simple. We need not create them, we need only recognise them. Moreover, we shall recognise them, not by extraordinary efforts, but by self-recollection and good faith. Hence it follows, that no man, whatever may be his condition, is really excluded from these exercises, or, consequently, from the advantages they provide for our progress. The maxims of the first sages, which have been transmitted to us by the most ancient traditions, attest that in the infancy of civilisation, there were profound meditations upon the truths which relate to human destiny. We sometimes meet, in the most obscure conditions of society, with individuals, who, although they have little acquired knowledge, have yet drawn from meditation light which astonishes; and who, thanks to this internal education, speak the language of virtue, better than the people of the world, who are vain of their knowledge. Those simple and respectable men, will not perhaps communicate their meditations: perhaps they cannot; they have not meditated by rule, and according to form; but they have contracted the habit of descending to the depths of their own hearts with perfect uprightness. They have not been turned from the study of themselves, by the distractions of vanity, and by the tumult of the world. They have learned

much in a short time, under the teaching of the great instructor of men. They have learned enough to know excellence, and to love it.

CHAPTER V.

MAXIMS AND RULES.

‘*LOVE,*’ said the wise man, ‘*and do what you will.*’ Happy he who understands this wise saying! It will preclude the necessity of any other precept; for it gives the source of law; and he who has it within himself, will not only understand the law, but possess the power of will necessary for its accomplishment, rendering its execution pleasant and easy. Morality is nothing but this great maxim fully developed and applied. But we must already have arrived at a high degree of perfection to conceive its value, and to be able to give ourselves up to it without danger. The neophyte of virtue would only find in it the source of a presumptuous illusion: extravagant minds would easily find in it a pretext for justifying their aberrations: men, whose morality is entirely speculative, and who mistake ecstasies for virtues, would think themselves authorised by it to become confirmed in their sluggish indolence; and they would draw from it food for their vanity. ‘*Love, and do what you will:*’ if these words cannot with most men supply the place of an explicit code of duties, they ought, at least, to be inscribed at the head of the code; to be repeated in every page of it; to sum it up and serve as its commentary.

There is something in our intellect and in our heart, that corresponds to the law of excellence. Our heart persuades us, our intellect commands us to observe it; the latter offering us the archetype of the action, and the former directing us towards the end. The soul more fully understands the law, and

is more inclined to fulfil it, in proportion as we succeed better in satisfying this double condition in the expression which promulgates the law. It is thus that the maxim, *Love, and do what you will*, may serve as a commentary on duty. The very object of the exercise of meditation, is to unite these two conditions, and to give the understanding of the law, by penetrating our mind with it; thus, connecting our practice with our motives, and exciting and enlightening at once that love which is called upon to accomplish it.

Indeed, the motives, which recommend the accomplishment of duty, never present themselves in an immediate and instantaneous manner, excepting when duty itself is expressed under the ~~most~~ general form; they become less sensible in proportion as we descend to particular applications, and thus remove ourselves from the principle. It is the part of meditation to fill up this interval, to renew the chain, and to bring the primitive light of motives to the most familiar applications.

As long as the expression of duty preserves that generality, which permits it to address itself immediately to the conviction of the mind and the feelings of the heart, this expression is hardly anything more than a simple maxim. When descending from this generality to practice, duty is described in detail, and its expression becomes more decidedly a rule.

We see beforehand what must be the utility and the inconvenience both of maxims and rules, and how much it is to be desired, for the interest of moral progress, that both should be as closely connected as possible. Fundamental maxims in morality have this admirable privilege, that they are of themselves luminous and eloquent; they have the evidence of axioms, and are addressed to the inmost faculties of the heart. They neither need to be justified by a display of logical argument, nor aided by any oratorical artifice. On the contrary, the more simplicity they preserve in their expression, the deeper will be the conviction they produce.

In the midst of a collection of individuals of every rank, sex,

and age, having nothing in common but the general qualities of the human race, but attentive, and for a moment free from passion, and exempt from outward distraction ; let one of those eternal, universal maxims suddenly be presented in all its purity, as yet without any application, and strong in its truth alone ; and what an echo it wakes in every soul ! With what unanimous and spontaneous consent it is received ! What a transport of admiration, what persuasion greets it, before any reflection has been able to foresee its consequences ! What homage is paid to it even by those who would not perhaps accept the consequences, if they imposed any sacrifice upon them ! With what a sincere and profound feeling we cling to it ! Its triumph will be more complete, in proportion to the perfect simplicity of the language, and the faithfulness of the expression. The multitude of the frivolous, strangers to the meditations of wisdom, freed for a moment from the dominion of their prejudices, may meet and understand, if unexpectedly called to the light of truth and to natural feelings.

For the most ignorant classes of society, there are a great number of apothegms, transmitted and received by universal consent, which exert a natural influence over men, and are indebted for it to the intrinsic evidence of the moral thought which they contain. The ideas, which they thus transfer into formulas, show themselves as primitive truths, which are better understood in proportion as they are less accompanied with demonstrations, and commentaries, and all scholastic display. It is the philosophy of the people, and its axioms sometimes contain a very deep meaning. This was the language, which morality borrowed among the first sages of antiquity. These were the codes traced for rising civilisation, by the Gymnosophists of Asia, the Greek Gnomics, and in the sacred books of all nations. The image of the excellent is produced in these common maxims as in a faithful mirror ; being manifested in them in the most natural forms, free from all foreign illusion,

such as it comes pure from the depth of the human conscience. We recognise it at sight, and applaud as we perceive it.

These are the primitive maxims, whence flow, in solitary meditation, such abundant light, and which become the objects of rapturous contemplation. These are the eternal maxims, which shed so bright a glory, both when they appear in philosophical productions, and when poetry or oratorical art has the happiness to seize upon them. Let us always observe, that the impression they produce is so far from being the effect of the artifices of style, that it is their simple presence only which gives to style itself power: the impression produced is always deep, in proportion as the discourse, like a perfectly transparent medium, is faithful to truth.

In a word, these maxims, which express the original notion of the good, are, as it were, a rallying point for the human race; they are the remembrances of a common country. When meeting with these truths so familiar and yet always so engaging, we experience a sensation like that of a friend who receives a friend, or of a disciple who finds his master.

But on account of this extreme generality and absolute character, which render them so luminous and fruitful, primitive maxims may sometimes be extremely dangerous. Contemplative minds entrench and shut themselves up in them, so as to dispense with acting; disdain, perhaps, in the movements of a foolish pride, the modest observances of practice. Necessarily presented in an abstract form, they may be wrongly understood; without applications, and adopted precipitately, they may be unseasonably invoked, and be employed in a wrong way. We shall sometimes be more dazzled than guided by the glory they spread around them. The enthusiasm which they have the power of exciting, will too often end by leading astray those who believe they may trust to them alone. The danger will increase, in proportion as those to whom they are offered are less informed, less exercised in reflection, and especially less used to observation, and less fortified by experience. Igno-

rance seizes with extreme eagerness upon those instruments, which seem to have an equally prompt and universal utility. Fanaticism ardently takes possession of those arms, which it can so well make to serve its cause. The logic of the passions has a marvellous art of drawing from the purest maxim the consequences which suit themselves. How many of these noble and true axioms we might quote, which have perhaps been inscribed upon the banners, a mad crowd has followed in their fury, and which, in the very midst of this strange profanation, were yet honestly invoked! Special rules and positive precepts escape such danger and prevent it. When they are seasonably employed, they become like so many ramparts. Placed at the other extremity of the chain of ideas, they always express the mode of some special and precise action, often with all its circumstances of time and place. They thus leave but a very limited field to reflection. They extend the imperative formula to the smallest details; they foresee and mark out every thing beforehand. Even in that they are useful; they offer to our ever weak, uncertain, and tottering will a fixed and sure support; they mark out for it the formula of its determinations; they have a rigidity, which resists the changeableness of circumstances and of our temper. Rules are all stamped by the character of authority which belongs to the moral law; they instruct while commanding. Rules are connected with habits; they take their form and have their tenacity. By placing themselves in certain circumstances of time and place, by taking possession of the minutest details, they contract a precision, a rigor, and an exactness, which prevent uncertainty and hesitation; they leave no room for discussion; they so circumscribe activity, that they render error unlikely in proportion as they are wisely conceived: thus they give extreme security to those who observe them. Rules for human activity are what the square and compass are to the hand of the workman.

Yet, special rules, by multiplying, and descending more and more to applications, and by seeking to foresee everything,

contract a dryness, which ordinarily accompanies all didactic preparation. Though they make the language of law understood, they have little eloquence in expressing sentiment: they define better than explain, and prescribe better than they persuade. They more easily seize upon the external life than penetrate into the secrets of the soul. Precise and energetic, when there is occasion to forbid what is evil and command what is just, their language is less rich and clear, when there is need of encouraging us to better things: they impose fidelity and duty more than they inspire zeal for virtue. In proportion as the rule becomes more particular, it is removed farther from the common focus of light; its motives become also less perceptible; and it then takes an appearance of arbitrariness in its language. The employment of it appears more easy because it is more immediate; but we comprehend it less clearly by employing it. Rules sometimes favor want of reflection; we trust to them blindly; we take little care to confine them to the cases for which they have been made; we are led to grant them a greater value than they deserve; we darkly perceive the bond which exists between them, the subordination they should observe, and the relations by which they are modified. They become constraints rather than guides. We thus in reality, impose upon ourselves numerous observances, rather than exercise ourselves in real virtues; we hold to them from a kind of habit, rather than from a sincere conviction. How many people would rather abandon a principle of morality than the particular rule they have made for themselves! Thus the moral sentiment is weakened although duties are multiplied.

Rules are a very agreeable thing for those who love to command, to judge, and condemn: we always have rules for others, when we have none for our own use.

We often place ourselves behind rules as behind a rampart, in order to defend ourselves against generous solicitations: we find or create rules, which would render all great actions impossible.

We often have rules so as to dispense with reflecting, as well as repertories to dispense with studying.

Examples explain the rule ; but it is not one example only, which gives the true explanation : it might give it falsely, by presenting it incomplete. A choice of examples is required which may show it under every aspect, and which may thus teach us to restrain it within its just limits.

There are many rules, which are to moral progress what scaffolds are to the construction of monuments, which, though necessary while the edifice is raising, should disappear when it is raised.

Sometimes the persons who impose upon themselves the most rules, are precisely those who have least need of them ; they dictate to themselves what they have to do, when they might do it naturally, from the mere impulse of their heart : by wishing to foresee everything, they take away the ease necessary for acting ; they lose sight of the chief end, by being absorbed in accessory means : it might be said that they embrace virtue less than they have been enchained by it. The practice of the excellent ought to breathe freedom and not feel constraint.

There is one rule prior to all others : it is, to rest in nature.

CHAPTER VI.

USE OF ALLEGORIES ; REWARDS AND PUNISHMENTS.

As maxims include motives, and rules involve applications, the art of moral education consists in quickening and enlightening rules by maxims, and giving reality and fruitfulness to maxims by means of rules.

Allegories and symbols may disguise the austerity of rules,

or supply the place of demonstrating their motives; and to awaken the capacity for feeling motives, or to give them greater power, we may have recourse to rewards and punishments.

Each of these means is good, with certain restrictions, and may be usefully employed, if not abused; but they are susceptible of great abuse.

Let us not scorn nor neglect any of the means adapted to second the instructions of virtue, to favor our understanding of them, or to render them more agreeable. Virtue has its poetry, sublime and enchanting, by which it reconciles humanity to its culture, animating and embellishing our earthly existence.

The employment of allegory is a useful regimen in the moral novitiate of man. The apologue and fable were the first treatises on morality. In the infancy of civilisation, allegory served as minister and interpreter of the laws of duty, promulgating them in society, instituting rites, ceremonies, emblems, and various symbols, by which are painted and personified those sacred and sublime ideas, which, in their purely abstract form, could not have been comprehended, and certainly would not have left on the soul any deep impressions. The learned have discovered in the symbols of ancient worship, the expression of much astronomical, agricultural, and historical knowledge; philosophers have discovered in them the primitive notions of morality, clothed in a costume calculated to conciliate the respect of the people.

Morality indeed, no less than religion, has an external form of worship. This form consists in the natural or conventional signs, which address the imagination of men, especially when they are collected together; and which awaken ideas, that may preserve the sentiments of patriotism, honor, fidelity, courage, respect: such are, for example, the peculiar dress of magistrates, the standards displayed at the head of armies. And these insignia are more powerful in proportion to their simplicity; because simple forms are less liable to obscure the ideas

in which they originated. In well governed states, where the usages of antiquity have been retained, where public manners bear the impress of past times, men breathe, walk, communicate with each other, in the midst of symbols, which recall the maxims of private or public morality. The proprieties of life are a sort of familiar language, which manifest the maxims generally recognised in society, and express, besides, the formulas of custom in manners.

The apologue plays, in the infancy of an individual, the same part as in the infancy of society. A thousand means, which we know too little, and neglect too much, offer themselves to a skilful instructor, by which he may surround his pupil with symbols fit to cherish moral sentiments in the youthful heart. It is because the proprieties of life are too little cultivated in public establishments of education, that there is a grossness of manners so often contracted in youth.

But this moral regimen of allegories, which is intended to second the authority of maxims, may be exaggerated and abused. It is intended as a preparation for early youth, to enlighten its ignorance and sustain its feebleness; but it may be prolonged till it makes the mind puerile. There is a time when emblems should give place to truth in its own imposing majesty and naked simplicity. The habit of always seeing truth in emblematic figures, would engender enervation of mind, and the sternness and gravity of duty would not be fully conceived and felt.

Sometimes it has been the case, that habit has degenerated into superstition, and the symbol has practically occupied the rank, due only to the ideas represented. Do we not see people become really mean, in order to obtain the insignia of honor?

Allegories have a disadvantage peculiar to themselves. Vivid images give vague and incomplete definitions, that only approximate the meaning, and consequently often favor error, beside exciting imagination and giving scope to the illusions

of mental rashness. Thus morality, which ought to have its root in reality, and only needs to be revived now and then by the inspiring breath of poetry, neglects the practice of positive duties, and excuses itself for culpable negligence by the worship it renders to the ideal of virtue, in reveries full of beauty.

There are certain times, in some countries, when moral sentiment seems to be exhausted ; ancient symbols lose their magical power ; and tradition, despoiled of its charms, begins to weary the mind. Then moral truths, if offered in their simplicity, experience a cold reception, and we accuse them of being trivial and superannuated. We are fatigued at always returning to them, and finding them eternally the same : we wish that they could be made new : it is necessary, in order to satisfy a frivolous and foolish public, to invent various and artificial combinations, by means of which they may attract attention and reanimate interest : it is necessary to bring to their aid all the resources of the dramatic art : truth must have an ingenious setting forth, its character be disguised, and a sort of an apology made for it ; and instruction must come with an agreeable air, as if it wished to please.

This is a shameful slavery of which the ministers of morality should hasten to make it free ; and from which it would not hesitate to free itself, if the ambition of vanity did not conspire with the indifference of the public. Let us brave the disdain of a world avaricious of pleasure, and not condemn virtue to blush for itself. Instead of soliciting the suffrages of the vulgar by a cowardly adulation, let us speak with a just and severe authority, with the authority which we receive from our commission.

Let us present the holy maxims of excellence, clothed in simplicity, and express with dignity the freedom which profound conviction inspires. Let us not despair of our age, but afford by the simplicity of our discourse a pledge of esteem to our auditors. We shall find auditors alive to this testimony and capable of answering to it.

The employment of rewards and punishments, if understood,

has a much more direct analogy than one would think, with the employment of allegorical signs. For rewards and punishments are essentially destined to recall and make felt the laws of duty, and to give life to the motives which justify them. In order that they may be useful, they should be limited to this: it is a sad mistake when they come to take the place of the motives themselves. All the morality of human actions is destroyed, its vital principle, at least, is destroyed, in its original source, if we conceive only of good as an action rewarded, of evil as an action punished. It is, then, personal interest alone, in all its nakedness, that usurps the seat of virtue, even in the accomplishment of what virtue prescribes. There is no longer good nor evil, merit nor demerit; but only a desire of enjoying, a fear of suffering,—a calculation of interest: the good man is only the most skilful calculator. There is no longer morality or justice, but only a vile Selfishness reigning in different forms, accompanied by its two odious ministers, Avarice and Fear. When this is so, let the terms punishment and recompense be employed no longer; for the ideas they express have disappeared: nothing is left but a market between him who commands, and him who obeys in order to obtain or to avoid something, or disobeys if he can obtain something better. He only merits rewards, who has done his duty in the face of persecution; and he should be punished, who has abstained from evil merely to avoid pain, but owns the intention of it in his heart.

Nothing, therefore, can be more fatal than a system of rewards and punishments so combined, that remuneration takes the place of moral sentiment, and becomes the only motive of determination. It is the object of morality to repress the blind desire of enjoyment, and arm the soul with a courageous resistance against pain and danger. But this system both intoxicates and degrades;—intoxicates, by making all-availing the hope of recompense which it promises;—degrades, by giving new power to the apprehension of punishment. As soon as there is nothing acknowledged beyond, in reward and punishment;

all the means of obtaining the one and avoiding the other, will be sought and found out; and at less expense than at the sacrifice of personal inclinations. Success, when obtained, will produce greater faithfulness to this instruction; and where there is ability and audacity, fortunate and powerful villany may be the result. And why would not this be honorable? That external advantage is obtained in which all merit consists. Precisely the effect that despotism produces on the general character of a people, the caprices of an instructor produce on the character of a pupil. Punishments and rewards become arbitrary, and take the place of law and duty. The sentiment of justice, if indeed it resists the influence of false instruction, revolts against the employment of a force that favors some and oppresses others; so that men, if they are not degraded, resist, and resist even what is good in itself, because, they have conceived it as an odious yoke. Thus every generous movement is stifled in its principle, or else directed against the authority, which has misconceived its vocation and abused its power.

And this effect, which results absolutely from arbitrary punishments and rewards, takes place also in a degree, when rewards and punishments are disproportionate to the real merit and demerit of the actions.

But if the employment of rewards and punishments is so conceived, that they both serve to bring the mind and heart to the knowledge of the sentiment of duty, they become an energetic language, a mode of instruction, salutary, in proportion as, instead of violating the notions of duty, it makes them more palpable. This end may be obtained, if an exact relation is observed between the real merit of actions, and their recompense; and if the choice of rewards and punishments preserves analogy with the moral notions whose awakening they should favor.

Rewards and punishments, borrowed from the pleasures and pains of the senses, are the least proper to fulfil this destination. It is to be feared, that they favor the inclinations of sensuality, rather than enliven the love of virtue. Solitude,

on the contrary, when used as punishment, disposes to contemplation, and through contemplation to reflection; and labor gives methodical and regular habits. Testimonies of esteem, however, are the best modes of remuneration; for by these, merit and demerit take a sensible form, which renders the notions, on which they are founded, more profound, and the remembrance of them more durable. When we behold a crime, or a fine action, a natural movement makes us express a wish to see the one chastised and the other rewarded: the same movement carries us from the consequence to the principle, from the application to the rule, if indeed any evident connexion subsists between them.

There is no one, who, in retracing the recollections of youth, does not recognise, that if on some occasions an unexpected reward has nourished vanity, and an arbitrary punishment in other instances has irritated his character, yet on some occasions, a punishment, of which we perceived the justice, and a reward, which was merited, have given to the sentiment of duty great power: the former, by lending to duty a severer language, which roused repentance; the latter by giving to it joyousness; both giving a solemnity which captivates frivolity, a seriousness which ripens reason.

This serious and solemn, though silent language, destined to repress too ardent passions and encourage yet feeble virtues, suits particularly well the moral youth of man; and yet, at this time, it is not well comprehended. Indeed, when it is well understood, it is generally least necessary.

But the views which ought to guide the instructor and legislator, in the creation of a system of rewards and punishments, are those which ought to guide us, in self-education, as to the choice of the motives we are to draw from the anticipation of rewards and punishments. We must look on them as a kind of language, and avoid the gross error of taking them as principles of determination. We must seek them as a support, not as a yoke. This truth is susceptible of great developement, and

should be a subject of much thought. To conclude:—allegories and symbols, as well as the influence of rewards and punishments, are useful as long as they accompany, comment upon, and second the direct teaching of moral truths; but they will become fatal when they pretend to supply their place.

CHAPTER VII.

TENDENCY TO EXCELLENCE.

ALTHOUGH it may not be granted to man to attain perfection, it is his destiny to direct himself towards it, and to approach it without ceasing. It is by this characteristic trait that we recognise the noble and elevated. Their eyes are ever directed upward; their march is constantly progressive; they have before them an indefinite career. Thus they preserve an immortal youth, and their life is animated by a powerful interest, and embellished by a high hope.

It is the characteristic of mediocrity in morals, as well as in the arts, to be satisfied with itself, and to see nothing beyond its own narrow limits. Importuned by the presence of what is superior, and alarmed by counsels which excite to progress, vulgar souls seek security in inaction, felicity in torpor; having a thousand pretexts for forbidding themselves all progress that would be accompanied with an effort. Sometimes they even affect a sort of disdain for what is distinguished, in order to console their vanity, while yielding to their effeminacy. They have genius only to conceive impossibilities, eloquence only to celebrate obstacles, and they profess a sort of worship for limitations. The stationary condition, in the eyes of certain people, is the ideal of prudence and wisdom. They confound immobility with perseverance; condemn all progress

as temerity; all hope as an illusion. Thus they establish, shut up, and imprison themselves, in an existence in some sort entirely mechanical, in which the only reason for acting, is to continue what they have begun to do, in which they confirm and encourage themselves in their errors, faults, and weaknesses, as if an irrevocable sentence had condemned them never to be free. Thus everything is cooled, coagulated, paralysed: man passes as it were into the fossil state; the very good he does, loses its charm; habits take the place of sentiments; routine dispenses with resolutions.

When thus carried on without acting, we turn constantly in the same circle; we feel no need of motives. But though we think to remain stationary in morals, there is no moral condition really so; and he who does not advance, goes back; for every day brings with it losses, which demand to be compensated by acquisitions; and we can only be supported by a spirit of life, which tends to constant regeneration. Indifference is certain failure. Thus the learned man when he learns no more, already forgets. While we continue to act externally in the same manner, we no longer continue to carry the same sentiment into our actions; with similar conduct we no longer have the same merit. Let us examine this treaty, which is formed with moral mediocrity, and ask ourselves what we do? what we mean? what we expect? what idea we have conceived of our destiny? whether we have a destiny? whether we feel, within, a voice which invites us to self-esteem, which calls upon us to grow and become more elevated? We think ourselves estimable. We are regular, perhaps, but we are not truly virtuous, for we imprudently think to enjoy security. If new circumstances transpire, what guide will direct us? If unforeseen difficulties spring up in our path, how shall we know how to conquer them? May God preserve us from the great vicissitudes of fate, from strong temptations and perilous situations!

The love of excellence cannot be subjected thus to a rigor-

ous and fixed measurement : it is in its nature active, expansive, thirsting for conquests. To declare that we have prescribed limits, which we will not surpass, is to confess that we do not feel for excellence true love : it is contradicting ourselves. To declare that we will stop at a given point in the career, is to confess that we have not known the true motives, which should already lead even to that point ; if they had been understood and felt, we should be impelled to pass beyond it.

Far from being frightened from the tendency to the best, as from an excessive fatigue, we should soon acknowledge, from our own experience, that the practice of duty becomes on the contrary always more easy and pleasant, in proportion as we advance towards excellence. Do we wish for an example ; that inward peace which is the fruit of virtuous habits and the sweet privilege of innocence of heart, becomes in its turn most favorable to knowing, feeling, and practising all which is excellent.

It is to the cowardly and lukewarm that duty becomes a yoke. Such is the close relation which exists among all the virtues, that each of them, in proportion as it is acquired, invites and calls upon its companions and lends them its support. This progressive march also preserves in the heart of man an inexpressible joy and hilarity, which redoubles his strength, disposes him for new undertakings, and aids him in their accomplishment. It is in the monotony of an existence without an aim, that we find lassitude. The activity of an existence consecrated to the search after excellence, finds in itself its encouragement and reward. The higher man rises into moral regions, the more he sees his horizon extend : from the summits which rise before him, come at once strength and light.

Great things are never accomplished without the passions ; but it is only one passion which gives the means of executing them, certainly, completely, and constantly ; the passion for excellence. The tendency to the best, is to virtue, what the spirit of invention is to the arts.

There has been much dispute upon the questions which appertain to the ideal, and upon the part which it can have in human operations ; and as it almost always happens, these discussions have perhaps thickened the clouds, instead of dissipating them. The ideal has been opposed to the real : hence the disdain of some men for the instructions of experience, the reproaches made by others to all which bears the character of improvement, as if improvement were a vain chimera. But the ideal, conceived in its true nature, is not at war with the real ; it is related to it by a double alliance ; it borrows from it elements ; it calls upon it ; it is instructed by it ; it serves to elaborate it.

To all active, intelligent, and free beings, copies and models anterior to every action are necessary, in which the action is sketched beforehand ; without which the action itself would be impossible. If the action to be performed has already been accomplished in perfect similitude by another agent in the presence of him who is about to repeat it, the model will be an object of the senses ; it will be *perceived*, and not conceived. But the novelty of situations, brought about by the continual change of circumstances would alone be sufficient to require a great number of operations, which have not, in actual reality, any model absolutely similar. There are also copies and types, existing as yet only in the region of ideas, and which are the anticipated image of the act to be produced. In the simple mechanical arts we may make the same remark and the same distinction ; the workman sometimes copies a work which he has before his eyes ; sometimes he conceives the image of an instrument or production which has not yet been executed. In the arts, which we call the imitative arts, there are also models drawn from observation, and models which are truly archetypes : however, these last have two conditions ; they are obliged to draw from real nature the elements of their combinations ; and they must conform to certain rules of proportion, suitableness, and probability, revealed to us by

the sentiment of the beautiful, itself inspired by nature, and carefully taught us by numerous and luminous examples in the works of nature. Under the inspiration of this sentiment, the imitative arts take from these objects, scattered upon the scene of reality, various beauties, choose from among them, and form new combinations: this image of the whole, thus intellectually constructed, becomes the archetype of the execution. If the imitative arts were deprived of this second order of models, they would confine themselves to simple descriptions, and execute only cold copies; on the contrary, by the aid of this second order of models, they call moral nature to their assistance, combining its phenomena with those of sensible nature; and the effects obtained become so much the more admirable, because by borrowing from these two regions of nature, what is most eminent in each, they have better known how to preserve the most perfect union and the closest sympathy between elements drawn from both. The positive sciences offer us something similar. If they have their direct observations, which are contented to collect and register facts, as they present themselves; they have also their experiments, the idea of which is a pure conception, and by the aid of which they interrogate nature, and extract from it new phenomena. It is to these happy experiments that they owe their most precious discoveries. Mathematics are in relation to mechanics and other branches of physics, as it were, a vast collection of copies and archetypes, which go before facts, preside over applications, and represent them in the thoughts, constituting the ideal of science. Legislation and policy, supported upon history, upon the knowledge of the human heart, upon the data of local circumstances, trace out, however, to those who govern human affairs, the preconception of the directions they are to prescribe for themselves; and, to the citizen, those rules of conduct which are written in codes. A code of laws is a collection of archetypes, presented to society, for those actions which embrace the different relations of men to each other.

Morality in its turn has served as a copy and archetype to the political legislator. Surely there is nothing more real, nothing better founded upon nature; for morality is only the supreme voice of nature, in the heart of man, announcing to him his destination. Conscience recognises, it does not create morality. The rules it has established are produced spontaneously, in presence of applications either realized or simply conceived. But it is in the power of thought to conceive beforehand the image of a multitude of possible actions: to each of these the established rules will adapt themselves; the adaptation, more or less entire, which will be found to exist between them, will compose copies of them more or less complete. The combination which would not exactly answer to this adaptation, would be the archetype of relative perfection for human nature. This is the ideal, which the genius of virtue seeks. The good man, when aspiring to the best, does nothing but repeat, in morals, what takes place every day in the domain of the arts and sciences, in the most simple actions of life, and what determines the merit and utility of the operations accomplished in these different careers. The ideal is to him of the same nature, though in a superior region: it is no longer fancied or chimerical; it is only more excellent than fact, because it corresponds to what is most eminent in the character of humanity. This active and persevering tendency towards the best, however wise it may be in its principle, has however many rocks to avoid. The first and greatest of all, is that blind and measureless *exaltation*, which steals from us the feeling of our own weakness; which, while hurrying us towards the phantom of ideal perfection, leaves us really unable to accomplish the good which is found within our reach. Let the impulse by which we are animated be ardent, certainly, constant, and indefatigable; but let it never be unquiet; then it will sustain itself. Let it not be even impatient. It is a great act of resignation for a soul kindled by zeal for virtue, to consent to acknowledge and suffer the inevitable slowness of pro-

gress, and to carry to the end of life the weight of its own imperfections; but this act of resignation is necessary: it is imposed by the condition of humanity: it can alone preserve the calmness necessary to see well the path which opens before us, and to walk in it with a sure step. Let there be just elevations in the views which guide us! But let them not be lost in the clouds! Let them not be vague and indefinite, as we too often observe among those, who, while devoting themselves to excellence, confide more in inward sentiments than in positive rules! It happens, then, that the sentiment itself evaporates, and becomes lost in speculations purely theoretical, instead of being converted into positive applications. The imagination, in sweet and sublime ecstasies, feeds upon the most exciting prospects; but the life receives but little influence from them: this sentiment becomes a poetry, which charms the leisure of idleness; it is no longer an instrument for conduct.

Lastly, and above all, this tendency must not be disordered or given up to chance. In the grand work of our amelioration, as in all industry, method is the fundamental condition of success. For advancement in excellence, there is a way traced out by prudence, an important and difficult art, which comports little with general and absolute rules, because it is modified for every one by their own individual dispositions.

We will begin with what is most easy: nothing is more prudent and natural; but we will not put off too long attempting also what is difficult; for we gain strength only by struggling against difficulties. Let us beware of flying them; let us only take care to graduate them.

We will begin by satisfying precise and rigorous obligations, before proceeding to works of pure supererogation; but let us not forbid ourselves to listen also to the generous inspirations; which sometimes invite us to pass beyond the strict line of duty! Often, in accomplishing a noble action, we obtain new strength to obey positive precepts: love disposes to respect, beneficence is an aid to justice.

We will begin by exercising ourselves in the virtues, which are of most immediate and frequent application. These are the most necessary ; they are also those which make themselves best understood and felt, and which bring with them most powerful encouragements, because we best see the result and taste the reward. It is easy to romance upon virtues, which we shall have no occasion to apply, and to draw from thence a pretext for neglecting those the daily practice of which are demanded of us : this manner of making ourselves virtuous, hypothetically, flatters at once our idleness and our vanity ; but it deceives the wish for improvement, it enervates its principle. Let us then apply ourselves to the duties which belong most peculiarly to our calling, to our situation in life ; duties most familiar and least brilliant, but more favorable to our improvement, precisely because they have less attraction for self-love. This shews a new and admirable value of those family duties, with which Providence has strewed the whole course of our lives, as if to give a value to each of our moments ; as if to consecrate our most habitual and intimate relations ; as if to change home into a sanctuary of virtue !

There are virtues which may be called *mother-virtues*, because they are as it were the main branch of a great number of others ; such are, for example, gratitude and justice. Let these, then, be the first objects of our ambition and efforts ; we shall draw from them, beforehand, understanding, and taste for those which are subordinate to them : we shall better penetrate into the principles and motives which should lead us to excellence : we shall better feel by what secret ties our duties are connected together : we shall judge better the rank they observe in regard to each other.

There are virtues, which are like so many sisters, and which lend each other mutual assistance : it will be easy for us to pass from one to the other. Sometimes also it is useful to cultivate at the same time virtues which seem to have almost opposite characters ; they serve to circumscribe and balance

each other : we avoid falling into the excess of too exclusive habits : we better preserve the harmony of the moral faculties. It is thus that the ruler of gymnastics combines the exercises, which require at once several kinds of motions, in order that the organs may be developed in harmony, and that no one may obtain exuberant vigor at the expense of the others.

There are virtues which may be considered as instrumental, that is to say, which furnish general means, by the aid of which others may afterwards be practised ; such are, for example, patience and obedience : we should take care to furnish ourselves with these beforehand, as much as possible, in order to come armed upon the theatre of the combat, or the field of labor.

We should confine ourselves to removing obstacles before we hurry towards the end. We should take precautions against danger before we launch into bold undertakings : we should repair our losses before we aspire after new acquisitions.

In everything, and here it is one of the fundamental *maxims* upon which reposes the whole system of progressive amelioration, we should study ourselves, in order to penetrate the true principles which are the motives of our duties, as well as those which lead us to recognise the original source of them ; for it is by meditating upon these principles, that we shall discover the relations which exist between the virtues, that we shall ourselves obtain the sentiments which, being common to them all, lead from the practice of one to the practice of the others. The details become easy to him who has seized the whole. Little things also have their relative importance, and may even receive a more considerable one, under a certain concurrence of circumstances. The elevated have to defend themselves from a negligence that is sometimes excessive, in regard to these observances of detail. They excuse themselves too easily for the little attention they pay to them. Pride may find in this disdain, a secret aliment. It is never allowable to attribute to ourselves a moral superiority, which may authorise voluntary

failings, however trifling they may appear. The reflection which recognises and confesses them as voluntary, aggravates them ; forgetfulness would have been a trifle, but affected negligence is a real fault. Besides, little things have sometimes extensive consequences, which cannot be foreseen, particularly in our relations with other men ; a slight imprudence may inflict a deep wound, and cause a great disaster. The observance of little things alone gives to the work of virtue, as to the productions of the arts, that consistent and finished character, which becomes its principal and chief ornament : it is to virtue what grace is to the arts. The observance of little things invokes the sacred and tutelary presence of duty to all the moments of our lives : it animates and fills with its influences all the atmosphere which we breathe. It has the advantage of making us run over a variety of objects, of making us perceive all their aspects, and thus lending a happy fruitfulness to moral notions. There is also a sort of elevation in knowing how to preserve a just respect for what is good, even when its image is reproduced in a more narrow scene ; in knowing how to respect ourselves in the most modest and obscure observances, as soon as they are in the established order, and in carrying noble motives even into the least occasions. In short, by giving to little things the degree of interest which is due to them, we preserve a salutary action. They are sports, if we please, but useful, honorable sports : we shall have the happiness of leaving no void, no failure in the labor of moral activity : we shall prepare ourselves gradually for the most difficult things : we shall have the merit of having conquered a difficulty, in binding ourselves to remark and execute what might have escaped attention ; but, above all, we shall find ourselves naturally led to the continuance of useful vigilance over ourselves, and in this single result we shall find an indirect and unexpected preservative against a crowd of dangers of another kind, and which might have been more or less serious. The observances of detail are as it were sentinels, scattered here and there, to keep us awake, and warn us

incessantly that in the career of moral amelioration we are not permitted to taste the repose of idleness and lethargy.

CHAPTER VIII.

HOW TO ACQUIRE AND PRESERVE SELF-GOVERNMENT.

MAN is born sovereign of himself ; but, to enter upon the possession of this magnificent gift of Providence, he must first feel his right of sovereignty ; and secondly, know the means of exercising his power. But this twofold discovery is slow, and only obtained with difficulty, for it depends upon a study, which is usually our last study ; that of self. Many men descend to the tomb almost without having suspected this most noble prerogative of their nature. If, as we think we have shown, and as we shall take occasion to repeat, self-government is a tutelary law, and not a capricious force ; if it must be exercised by a wise restraint, by an enlightened direction, it requires as its preliminary condition, that man, in his self-communion, should have, above all, a familiar knowledge of himself ; that he should know how to question, to answer, and to comprehend himself. He must have attentively observed both the springs applied to his disposition, the wants which he must satisfy, the obstacles he must surmount, the dangers he must avoid, the resources he must bring to his aid, and the cautions which he must observe. He must know himself, as an instructor must know his pupil, as a workman must know the material upon which he labors, and the instrument which he employs. Thus he may learn to guide himself,—which is the true way to command himself ; thus he may obtain his own confidence in sincere and assiduous self-communion. He will also learn to foresee and to provide ; to impose upon himself only what he is capable of

executing, but to require of himself all of which he is indeed capable. He will even know how to tolerate and to pardon himself, when it is necessary, not through a weak complaisance, but with mingled indulgence and severity. He will know how to raise himself, to guard himself from discouragement, as well as from rashness : sparing himself useless efforts, he will thus facilitate useful ones.

Vigilance must carry on and preserve the work which study of self has begun. Like an active sentinel, our eyes must be constantly open, not only upon what happens without, but upon what passes within. We must observe in their origin the secret movements of the heart, in order to encourage or check them according to necessity : we must assign the precise measure which they must not pass ; taking precautions not only against attack, but also against surprise ; and as there is no surprise more dangerous than that which borrows the charm of pleasure, we must not only be warned of what may wound, but of what may seduce us : we shall thus be preserved from the yoke most difficult to shake off,—from the yoke we have voluntarily accepted. This vigilance, it is true, sometimes is wearied, disconcerted, and distracted ; and is apt to fail precisely at the moment when it is most necessary. It must then be persevering ; but let it not be restless, agitated, and ferocious ; let it be exercised in a gentle, equable and uniform manner. Let the soul act toward itself, not as an inquisitor, but as a witness and confidant : then self-contemplation will be exercised with less effort. Let us also avoid as much as possible hurrying ourselves into the tumult of distractions : let us avoid too rapid and sudden changes of situation ; and let us redouble our attention, when we enter upon a new and unknown situation.

One of the greatest difficulties in the exercise of self-government, arises from the singular inequalities sometimes experienced in the mental states. We cannot count upon ourselves : the state of things upon which we had regulated ourselves, sometimes appears so changed, that all our measures are found

defective : the resources which offered themselves to us when we enjoyed serenity, fail us in agitation ; the prospects of the practice of excellence, which smiled upon us with so many charms, during the course of a peaceful meditation, only discover to us, at other moments, a barren country where we perceive nothing but weariness to be endured. The more we are inclined to exultation, the more frequent and perceptible these vicissitudes become : but self-knowledge and inward vigilance sometimes bring us back to our level ; the remembrance of past stages leads us to anticipate those which will come : as in serene and prosperous days we view ourselves with too blind confidence, so in cloudy days we are guided and supported by the image of happier times. The consistent man not only governs other men, if he is invested with public functions, with more ease, but he constantly governs himself with more ease.

However, the prudence of the most consummate wisdom is not sufficient for self-government. The exercise of this authority often demands a suitable firmness and though this firmness should be used with reserve, we should be capable of employing it when necessary. When the storm grows around us, and bursts ; when the tempest increases and invades the soul, and all is confusion, our skill is no longer sufficient ; we have need of all our intrepidity : the enemy assails us on all sides : the inclinations which we condemn, urge us on, and hurry us away, in spite of ourselves, by their impetuosity and violence : neophytes of virtue, how could we think ourselves safe ? Called to an open struggle, safety rests only in courage. What now is the part of man ? He must be a man ! he must do a difficult but an indispensable thing ; he must exercise his will freely, decidedly, perseveringly. It might be dangerous, in moral adolescence, to be called to the exercise of our own will, while it still wants energy and life ; for man, when experienced, although thinking to exercise his will, often submits to the yoke of his inclinations, or to the will of another. But we cannot too soon

exercise our will, after we are capable of it. This education of the will requires a just independence, gradually obtained and wisely circumscribed. We cannot become men under a prolonged tutelage; and the habit of subjection renders us unskilful in the exercise of our own will. We are like a slave who thinks himself emancipated, when he has only changed his master; though perhaps he has given himself a harder one than he had before.

It is more important, and unfortunately more difficult, to maintain a just correspondence between the energy of our will and the extent of our knowledge. If, when the equilibrium is lost, the will prevails, we experience only the irregularity of a force which hurries on at random; which cannot fail to be enslaved, unknown to itself, having no longer any regulator. If the equilibrium is lost in the contrary sense, we lose ourselves in an idle contemplation, in which we despair in presence of an end we have not strength to attain; and even the strength which still remains, becomes useless in a career so disproportionate. But though inexperience is impatient to act, experience often leads to indecision. It happens then that we ourselves contribute to break this necessary equilibrium, by wishing to act before we are enlightened, and finding ourselves discouraged when we are instructed. The real power of the will is in that of reason. Do not let us confound the transports of desire with the determinations of the will; the former have usually an impetuosity so much the greater as we are not in presence of obstacles; and this impetuosity deceives us with regard to the resources we shall find in ourselves at the decisive moment. Presumption is the daughter of Exaggeration, as well as the mother of Imprudence. If we have counted too much upon our will, it will fail us at the decisive moment, and break in the trial. There is, however, an art, and it is the art of wisdom, which calls knowledge to the assistance of the will, and converts it into real strength. To what does the education of the will belong, if not to reason? Would we learn to exercise our will with

firmness? Let us know first how to conceive and adopt sincere and profound convictions. Nothing gives us decision and support like truth. Let us know how to confide in the strength which Providence has provided for us. It is proportioned to our task. But let us not embrace beforehand, by a rash foresight, the whole extent of the efforts which will be demanded of us: they are not to be the work of a single day. When this salutary equilibrium is maintained, knowledge, prudently directed, instead of overflowing into the field of impossibility, is circumscribed in the sphere of the possible, diffusing itself more abundantly there; reason rests upon the alliance of practice and theory, experience and principles: it thus composes for every one a sort of relative science, in which the information collected is naturally found in harmony with the efforts which are demanded of the character, and in which knowledge turns entirely to the profit of action. The judgments of reason have in themselves something grave and solemn, which operates at once as a restraint and support. The voice of reason, penetrating the soul, preserves it in our esteem, and suggests to it a confidence, which is always an element of strength. The will, while collecting the emanations of reason, insensibly contracts something of that fixedness and immutability, peculiar to the truths by which reason is nourished, and thus receives from them a natural vigor, more durable in proportion as it is more calm. But reason never exercises these salutary influences with more success than when it is the interpreter of duty; then, to the dignity and stability of truth is united a power still more active; the imperative form which the injunctions of duty take, becomes a spring ever ready to second the resolutions of the will. There is in the focus of conscience a secret and concentrated heat, which reanimates the heart as soon as we approach it. The reflective feeling of duty is to the will, what the points of support are to mechanical force. Passionate men may have impetuosity and vehemence, like the gigantic and convulsive strength of a sick man in delirium; but it is only when man

is penetrated with his duty, that he has a firm, equal and constant will. Obstinacy is inflexible, but inflexibility is not constancy; for a wise and reasonable constancy will bend to the modifications required by the varieties of circumstances. Constancy is immutable in the principle, flexible in the application; while obstinacy is capricious and arbitrary in its very immobility, because it refuses to follow the natural course of things. To renounce a resolution, acknowledged to be erroneous, or which is no longer adapted to a new situation, is to respect one's self, and to exercise self-government.

There are then two chief ways of obtaining and preserving this inward empire, the habit of observing, and the habit of conquering ourselves. Every concession which we make to effeminacy, to cowardice, to negligence, to discouragement, in the ordinary course of life, is an abdication of our sovereignty, and becomes afterwards an impediment to our efforts, when we attempt to recover ourselves.

Difficulties, which we think external, are in reality, if they can be surmounted, only the difficulties which we find in ourselves. For instance, the difficulty of study arises from the weakness of our attention; the difficulty of a perilous undertaking is the want of the courage which it demands; the difficulty of labor is the effort or perseverance it requires. It is always ourselves who are insufficient; and we often find ourselves so, only because we dare not attempt all of which we are capable. A salutary preparation, then, for acquiring self-government, is to exercise ourselves in struggling against the obstacles, and conquering the difficulties, which present themselves in external life. Men who are in the habit of triumphing over difficulties, are the only men who become truly distinguished, as they alone discover all of which they are truly capable, and take entire possession of their faculties. But to succeed, it is necessary to take care not to hurry blindly into undertakings above our strength. It is necessary, as in gymnastic exercises, to graduate our efforts; to try by degrees; to attempt under-

takings just above those we have been accustomed to execute. But in casting our eyes upon the world, we are surprised to see, on one side, so many people who dare not do what they can; and on the other, so many attempting what they cannot do.

We may remark, that when the government of ourselves escapes us, it is almost always because we have allowed ourselves to be concentrated upon the present moment and upon some exclusive impression, which invests us on all sides. It is very useful then, in order to preserve our liberty, and the integrity of our strength, to preserve extensive and constant communication in the past and the future, with all that may offer an alliance to the will; we thus oppose to the predominant impression, the recollections or anticipations proper to balance it; we preserve its authority, by maintaining an equilibrium of resistance. Elevation of sentiments and ideas is of great advantage in self-government. The soul, in order to reign, must sit as it were upon a throne, from whose height its eye may extend far into space and time.

Men, who are without affections, sometimes seem to be distinguished for their self-government; they are at least habitually tranquil. Yet, if an inclination of personal interest awakes in them with impetuosity, a precious auxiliary is wanting. Such men are most easily carried away. Thus, we shall preserve so much the better the power of moderating an affection, which might be inclined to pass the limits, by opposing to it more just affections. False minds are those which have a single idea; wandering souls are those which yield to a single motive of action. Good minds and free souls range through a variety of ideas and motives.

Two principal means contribute to the education of *this* moral power, which the soul draws from self-government; order and calmness. They are closely allied. In a confusion of ideas and feelings, the government of ourselves infallibly escapes us; we no longer see the end; we no longer know where to find the means; we can hardly recognise ourselves. In the

midst of order the direction may be marked ; in the bosom of calmness the faculties may preserve all their freshness, and strength all its liberty. It is even sufficient that order and calmness reign around us, that we may begin already to reap from them this beneficent influence. Melody, sympathy, all that transmits to us the sweet impressions of harmony, give to our faculties a beginning of independence. We have from that time a confused sentiment of our power and dignity ; we feel ourselves capable of greater things, because we acquire the consciousness of our free will. It is necessary, it is true, to possess already some power over ourselves, that we may fulfil this double condition ; but it will be the first employment we should make of it, because it will prepare for all the others. The sculptors of antiquity usually represented heroes in the attitude of repose ; they found in calmness the loftiest expression of true force.

Besides, the care which procures a habit of order and calmness consists generally in foresight and detail, and does not always require energetic efforts. It is a daily regimen, and partly a favor of nature, which only needs to be preserved. Although we feel the storm ready to burst, although we perceive the dark cloud in the horizon, by redoubling our vigilance, we may still attach ourselves to the maintenance of order and calmness. Everything is lost, the instant anarchy is introduced within ; while all the means of resistance and safety remain to us, if we avoid agitation. Sometimes, when the tempest exercises its ravages with extreme violence, it is prudent and wise to content ourselves with furling the sails, remaining as it were inactive, mere witnesses of what is passing within us, not approving it, but not hazarding open combat, and waiting patiently till the storm is appeased. It is enough not to yield, and to remain motionless.

One cause which most frequently prevents us from enjoying the power we might obtain over ourselves, is a sort of terror we conceive of it, as if it were to impose upon us too much restraint,

and too painful sacrifices. We hope at least to taste a sort of repose, by giving ourselves up to impulse, and by abandoning ourselves to the current in the river of life. This is because we have a false idea of self-government ; we have thought it a tyrant, which would torment our existence ; a sort of continual torture. If we dared to make use of it, we should soon perceive that it is liberty itself, that it is the only principle of true security. If it demands some inward combats, it is to prevent shocks a thousand times more painful ; if it requires the vigilance and fatigue of the pilot, it is to prevent the ship from breaking against the rocks. The education which developes and cultivates this great moral power, has doubtless some hard and painful exercises ; it demands the sweat of the brow, but it is not exempt from charms ; it has its pleasures, manly and profound ; it alone can render us capable of tasting true repose ; for there is no real repose, but that which follows and rewards labor.

CHAPTER IX.

OF THE DIFFICULTIES WE MEET WITH IN THE STUDY OF SELF.

If we only considered how near and intimate is the subject of the study of self, we might suppose that of all studies it would be the most easy. And since it carries us back to the object of our most lively affections, we might think it would be most agreeable, and that we should proceed to it by a natural impulse. Yet it is precisely the contrary.

Philosophers have vied with each other in recommending to us the study of ourselves, as the first and most essential introduction to wisdom. But who has taught us how to attain this

knowledge, and to triumph over the obstacles that we may meet with ?

Some obstacles arise from the very nature of things, some from the conditions of our faculties ; and all the causes, which ever lead us to error, act with their highest degree of influence on this subject ; and as if it were not enough that we may be deceived in so many ways, we often take pleasure in self-deception ; ourselves spreading the snares, and too often succeeding in surprising ourselves.

When the imagination seeks to lead us astray in judgments relative to external facts, there remain to us means of verification, in some sort material, upon the theatre of this same external reality, of which it has presented to us an unfaithful picture : the image and the reality are situated in two different regions : we may oppose them to each other. But in the study of ourselves, the image and the reality are placed in the same region : they touch and are confounded. One takes the place of the other. Sometimes we seem for a moment to be what we desire to be ; at other times, we seem to be what we fear we may become : our fears and our hopes pass from the future into the present ; we think we can do all that we conceive. This is why enthusiastic people are so strangely deluded about themselves, and all in such good faith. The idea which they contemplate and embrace with such lively ardor is embodied in their eyes ; *they* give it an existence ; *they* personify it ; they persuade themselves, in good faith, that *they* are in immediate relation with it : the poem which charms them becomes to them history—*their own* history. They see, or think they see themselves, in the pictures which are their work : they think they see themselves act in the phantoms they have created and put in motion.

Will not temper, also, which so changes the aspects of external objects, give its peculiar expression to our own countenance ; and if it can render us sad and joyous, how will it be prevented from creating causes of sadness and joy, in the world within, where it has sway ?

If there are no subjects on which we are more exposed to error than those upon which we have some partiality, what will not be the danger in a study whose subject interests us more than any other in the world? Who can remain an indifferent and impenetrable spectator of what is passing within himself? Who, having to judge himself, will not take his cause in hand, and be his own advocate rather than his own judge?

It is often the case that the things which we perceive least, are those most familiar to us, and which compose our ordinary routine; they do not arrest our attention or excite our wonder: what is permanent we forget; we only remark its absence, if it happens to be wanting; what happens to everybody enters into the frame work of our habits; but is there anything more familiar to us than ourselves? This is why so many people live almost without suspecting that they are in their own society; at least they only pay attention to it, if this moral self, their companion, experiences some accident or transformation which may excite surprise and give notice of its presence.

We are full of mysteries: we have both inclinations and faculties, which we do not suspect, till an unforeseen circumstance points them out. We contain in ourselves the most manifest contradictions. The most subtle motives are often those which influence our determinations most; they envelope our will as with a kind of invisible net-work. We may feel what we possess, but we do not see what we want. The less progress we make, the less we discover what is still wanting; the more we lose, the more we become incapable of appreciating the value of our losses. But can we even truly estimate what we possess, if we do not know what we want?

Shall we invoke the experience of the past, which can alone enable us to observe the present state rightly? But, that the past may be well understood, it is necessary that it should have been well observed. When the issue of our undertakings enlightens us, it is generally too late to correct ourselves. Childhood does not observe at all; youth observes superficially;

when maturity arrives, it is late to begin the investigation. When will the application of experience begin? Besides, there are so many ways of explaining want of success, shall we be likely to choose that which would reveal to us our faults?

Shall we invoke comparisons? for in effect we only judge truly by comparing. But in comparing ourselves with others, rivalry troubles our vision; the presence of our superiors humbles us; that of inferiors puffs us up: in the same manner as we are deceived in judging others by ourselves, we are also often deceived in judging ourselves by others. Hence rash emulation and unskilful imitations.

Shall we examine ourselves in profound silence and calmness? Doubtless such is the condition necessary for a true self-examination. Yet on the contrary it is precisely at the moment of action that it would be useful to consider ourselves with attention; for then our faculties are in play: it is on occasions that we really measure our strength; for occasion brings with it unexpected resources or obstacles. The evils we most feared, the blessings we desired with most ardor, are often those which appear the least as soon as they come: the dangers by which we were the least alarmed become the most serious. The solitary thinks he knows himself, but he only knows what he is in solitude; and he can foresee less than any other man, what he will become in a sphere of activity. We only discern what we are, in the presence of objects, and then they attract us: we must see out of and beyond ourselves, in order to act. In proportion as passion is more violent, it would be the more necessary to observe its transports, but at the same time it is so much the more difficult. Shall we invoke the testimony of other men? Supposing that they say exactly what they think, still some will exaggerate the good in us, through affection or from policy; others the evil, from animosity or envy.

The only instrument which we can use for this study, reflection, is an instrument which wants fixedness and precision;

it slips away, vacillates, is fatigued, then shakes and trembles in the hand that employs it, and escapes incessantly.

Besides, if we concentrate ourselves too much upon ourselves, we end by seeing nothing, or by seeing all that we wish to see. There are abysses, in which we may lose ourselves.

Do we succeed in taking ourselves captive sufficiently to make correct observations? Already, by that very process, an observable change has taken place in our internal state. The personage we thought to seize upon and observe, is concealed; he has already disappeared. We judge ourselves more soundly when the moment of action has past by.

And as our inward state may be too complex, it is also extremely changeable. It would be necessary that the investigating eye should follow it perseveringly through all its phases. In this continual change, which is the moment we should choose, to serve as a rule to our judgment, and to give us an exact idea of ourselves? The crisis of exultation and of discouragement, whose testimony is the most unfaithful, have precisely this character, that each of them envelopes us in an atmosphere peculiar to itself, represents things as if they were to last such as they are now, makes us forget the past, and takes possession exclusively of the future.

In the medley caused by the influences which come to us from without, and the reaction which proceeds from within, we can hardly distinguish what is derived from these two sources. The more we are subjected to external influences, the more unable are we to measure what belongs to them.

In the same manner as vulgar prejudice transfers to bodies the colors which affect our eye, the soul refers to objects its own peculiar modifications; we attribute, then, to circumstances, what belongs to ourselves. Sometimes, on the contrary, there are movements within us which are transmitted to us, but of which we suppose the cause is in ourselves. We think things impossible, because we have not been daring; we think ourselves capable, because we have been assisted. Like the

navigator who thinks the shore of the river moves,—when we change, we think the world changes. We take borrowed qualities for elements of our character ; we take habits we have contracted, for a condition inherent in our nature ; we attribute to our faculties what is due to instruments and circumstances ; we judge of all situations by those which are known to us. And even when we succeed in remarking effects, we, in a thousand ways, mistake their causes.

Such are the difficulties, at least in part ; for the more we study, the more of them we discover. But we have supposed a sincere wish to know ourselves. What if this wish itself fails? Where are those in whom it is found really entire? It is not merely that through frivolity, ignorance, or dissipation, we appear indifferent to the acquisition of this fundamental knowledge ; it is not merely that we neglect it, that we even avoid to cultivate it, concealing ourselves from our own eyes, and flying from ourselves, as if we feared our own society, and dared not expose ourselves to our own investigations ; often, we go so far as to use artifices to surprise ourselves, and to appear to our own eyes otherwise than as we are. Sometimes this is to flatter or excuse our inclinations ; sometimes to please our own self-love and our pride ; sometimes from cowardice ; sometimes from all these motives together. When the question is to satisfy ambition or presumptuous desires, we wish to suppose ourselves strong. We no longer confess our strength when there is a difficult duty to fulfil. We exaggerate in ourselves the qualities which appear meritorious. We put out of sight those which, by offering a natural assistance, would diminish the merit of our efforts. Is it not from this last reason, for instance, that every one accuses himself of want of memory, while no one accuses himself of want of judgment? Egotism wishes to deck its idol ; sensuality wishes to repose, consequently to justify itself ; it even wishes to exalt itself in its own eyes, to think itself less gross than it really is, in order to enjoy still more. We can with difficulty confess our faults to other men, and we do not

like to confess them to ourselves ; our own censure would touch us more nearly, and pursue us more constantly. Vanity and self-love cannot consent to recognise themselves in the movements they inspire ; for in recognising themselves they would be humiliated ; they would contradict themselves, since they are only a weakness of character ; they must disguise themselves, then, in order to succeed in preserving that distinguished attitude to which they pretend. Often, while seeking to show ourselves to other men under the most favorable point of view, in order to obtain their approbation or their good will, we may be so penetrated by the part we play, as to finish by thinking it serious, and to fall into the mistake we have prepared for others ; like an actor who should continue to play the comedy alone on his own account. Enthusiastic persons, after having begun to deceive themselves in the best faith in the world, always finish by deceiving themselves deliberately. All exaltation, changeable in its nature, has intervals of relaxation ; and when the exaggeration is calmed, the enthusiastic wish still to support the same character ; they are not willing to agree that they are no longer the same ; they compose for themselves a factitious exaltation ; they remove everything which might trouble it ; they especially fear a ray of light ; they condemn themselves to a sort of charlatantry towards themselves, and become their own dupes. Something similar may also happen to those who confine their morality to speculative contemplations ; they would be troubled in their ecstasies by the recollection of their real life, for they are too little in unison with their sublime theories. It is necessary then to find a way to interpret their motives, that their actions may no longer offer so shocking a contradiction : they persuade themselves that the conceptions of the mind have real root in the soul ; reconcile the two personages who mutually give each other the lie : this reconciliation consists in demonstrations and words, and one of these two personages deceives the other.

We have a thousand stratagems by which to succeed in these



fatal combinations. We put on all sorts of masks to deceive ourselves. We are singularly favored, in these artifices, by the numerous obstacles which naturally render the study of self so difficult. We point out often with rare skill the kind of analogy which is found between certain good qualities and the faults which correspond to them ; and as the latter are only the excess of the former, and belong originally to the same generating principle, we shall easily succeed in deluding ourselves with regard to the limit that separates them. But nothing favors more the illusions which lead us astray in the study of ourselves, whether they are sincere, or arise from our own bad faith, than the mixture and confusion which we allow to come into the motives of our conduct. If we have complicated intentions, we may give our actions any explanation, even to ourselves ; for there are laudable aims side by side with those we do not like to confess to ourselves. A confusion of sentiments and ideas throws a profound obscurity over all within : in this darkness we see whatever we desire to see ; we create a romance upon ourselves ; we want the means of comparing it with reality, and consequently of recognising what is only pure romance. Besides, the more agreeable it is, the more we love to believe it ; and we always end by believing what we desire.

CHAPTER X.

THE ADVANTAGES THAT MAY BE DRAWN FROM OUR OWN FAULTS.

EVERYTHING may contribute to our progress, even the faults which seem to keep us back ; and of all our means of progress, these may become the most useful, since the occasions are so constant and general.

The best men do not escape certain anomalies of character and certain inequalities of disposition : perhaps the most distinguished men are the most exposed to these, as they possess the most eminent qualities.

Sometimes the extraordinary flight, which some one of the faculties of the heart or mind takes, breaks the equilibrium which ought to reign among them ; sometimes the consciousness they have of their intentions, or the feeling they have of their strength, inspires in them a too blind confidence ; sometimes they go beyond the end, in abandoning themselves, without reserve and without measure, to a movement honorable in its principle ; sometimes their attention, absorbed by the efforts which difficult enterprises require, neglects to keep watch on other circumstances ; sometimes they think they may allow themselves some negligences, as a sort of indemnity for their sacrifices ; and they believe themselves authorised to be less severe upon themselves, on account of the merits they have acquired.

All of us experience, more or less, and suffer from these vicissitudes. Sometimes we ourselves change, without being able to account for it ; sometimes we can go forward naturally and without effort ; sometimes we are drawn away to what is evil, in spite of ourselves. Holy inspirations come and go with the rapidity of light : the soul is elevated, and falls down ; wakes up and sleeps again ; is kindled by the brightness of excellence, is exhausted by too prolonged contemplation. We are subject, as it were, to various internal maladies, during which we can hardly recognise ourselves ; then our views are agitated, and our sensibility appears extinguished. The more we have tasted of elevated things, the more we are discouraged by these failures. To form resolutions ; to break or forget them ; to conceive noble hopes ; to be beaten down in courage ; to experience generous sentiments ; to yield to childish weakness ; to project, to essay, to fail, to be discouraged, to experience regret ;—is not this an abridged history of our life ? or if we at-

tain to a fixed and stable disposition, does it not become the blind routine of habit, or the effeminate inactivity of indifference? We escape error, only by renouncing progress; and changes, only by falling into inertia.


Sometimes the circumstances which are around us, exercise, by turns, contrary influences. Not being prepared to receive or repulse these different influences,—we are surprised and disconcerted by the unlooked for changes which work around us: we no longer resist the impulses which are given to us: we vary with the objects which act upon us; yet believe ourselves always to be the same, because we continue in our effeminacy and our negligence. Thus we find few sustained characters; and a man entirely consistent, is the most rare thing in the world. Men, judged on the whole, are neither so good nor so wicked as they appear. We only see men in some particular aspect. We do not suppose the same individual can contradict himself. We reason from what we have seen in him, as to what we are yet to observe. Hence so many differing and opposing judgments are made of the same man. Each spectator judges according to the side presented to himself.

But the illusion which a spectator experiences, we experience in judging of ourselves. Exposed to constant oscillation, we cannot measure, and are not aware, to what degrees we rise and fall. In each aspect of ourselves we almost believe we occupy a fixed post: we lose the memory of the past: we believe we can count upon the future. Hence the ordinary causes of our faults; hence the principal use which we can draw from our faults.

Unfortunately the feeling of these faults, when we do recognise them, produces upon us generally an effect very different from that which ought to attend them. We do not do evil for evil's sake; but when we do evil, we exclude the image of good, lest it should importune us: we are agitated; disorder enters into the mind and heart; having given up to weakness, we become more feeble for falling; being carried away, we are

intoxicated, and lose the sense of proportion. If we cannot acknowledge ourselves guilty, we falsify conscience; if we do recognise ourselves culpable, we become accustomed to the idea of our faults, and consent to be culpable, and are in danger of degrading ourselves.

But let us stop before we fall into this abyss. Let us take care, above all things, not to let a first fault act upon us *like an engagement*; let us take care not to live associated with our fault without disavowing it—nor to accept stains upon our character, nor inward shame, the most ignominious of all shame. A fault is a little thing, if the character still preserves vitality. It is indeed unfortunate, that a severe world often *overwhelms* without pity, by an irrevocable decree, those who have failed. It puts on them the seal of hopeless reprobation. In taking away the hope of reinstatement, it condemns the guilty to persevere in dishonoring themselves forever; it excites them to render themselves despicable; it seems to say to them, ‘Vice is your lot and heritage.’ Yet the world which pronounces such a proscription, is the same world which holds in its bosom so much unheard of crime, and which sometimes can excuse so easily, can praise extravagantly, can flatter, and which even prescribes great violations of duty, if they be surrounded with brilliancy, followed by success, or conformed to prejudice. Perhaps the wretch, who is proscribed, is, notwithstanding his fault, less corrupted than his judges. Happy are those *compassionate* beings who bring aid to the most real of misfortunes; who stretch out their hands to the falling; who, by testifying their solicitude, give a pledge to them of the return of esteem! True physicians of the soul! who do not wound again the wounded, but cure them; who give to them hope, as a means of remedy; who, strong in their own virtue, do not fear to show themselves indulgent; and who, by a well understood indulgence, open the way of repentance. Thanks be rendered to religious doctrines, which hold open constantly to the repentant the doors of the sanctuary of virtue, which restore in the eyes



of the Supreme Judge those who have been wounded by the capricious opinion of men! Vincent de Paule is still greater in the prison of slaves, than in the hospitals, and near the cradle of the foundlings.

Those who enter the career of excellence, after having rushed upon it with ardor, are often discouraged on finding how feeble they are. They believe themselves in full possession of that virtue which they worship, and they find themselves giving up to the faults which they condemn;—they are afflicted; they ask themselves if this pure ardor by which they are animated was not itself an illusion; they dare not count upon themselves; they become timid, lukewarm, and are checked. Those who are advanced in the career of excellence are often astonished that they must struggle with adversaries, and see them reappear after having been once vanquished. Discovering every day new imperfections in themselves, because they see better, both what they ought to be and what they are, they suffer themselves to give up to lassitude and sadness. The experience of our faults, if we know how to consult it, brings us always valuable knowledge and new strength. It is a great, difficult, but salutary instruction, which initiates us into the knowledge of ourselves;—it is a warning which calls us to a more active and continual vigilance; it shows us the weak places in our character, and the external dangers which threaten us the most; it makes us perceive whither the declivity on which we abide, will conduct us, if we allow ourselves to be hurried away. We may thus draw from one error the preservative against others, more numerous, and greater;—we are preserved also from another kind of error, not less fatal, which springs out of rash presumption and false security: it marks for us the degrees of the arc which we describe in the mournful oscillations to which our changeableness condemns us; it marks also the points on which we fail, through impotence or cowardice, and those on which we go to excess, through exaggeration or impetuosity: it makes us self-collected: it invites us to serious

reflections : it leads us to recognise the causes and consequences of our determinations, and the different influences to which they are subjected : it exercises us in a severe and earnest contest with ourselves : it dissipates a kind of illusions, which especially lead us astray—those of vanity.

And since it dissipates the illusions with which vanity surrounds us, the experience of our faults makes us free, through the censorship which it leads us to exercise upon ourselves. The condemnation, which we pronounce against ourselves, demands a courage which renders all other courage more easy ; it requires a sacrifice of self-love, that which, of all others, is often the most difficult, and generally is the last to which we resign ourselves. The sincere man experiences a much more lively horror for what is evil, when that which is evil has invaded some portion of himself : when he feels himself sullied by its presence, he perceives more evidently everything that there is in a violation of duty which is at war with the condition of his existence and the order of his faculties, and rejects this fatal anomaly with so much the more energy, as he feels himself more nearly touched. He finds, also, that virtue, after having been an instant obscured by a cloud, rises to his eyes with a more glorious majesty, having laid aside the veil which had covered it. The traveller, distant for a time from his country, finds it more beautiful than ever, when he again comes to his native shore. Reconciliation gives a new power to ties which were momentarily broken : the river rushes forth with redoubled impetuosity when the obstacle which arrested its course has disappeared. We have seen passionate or frivolous men suddenly arrested in their wanderings, and dissipation, by the sense of a fault committed ; and brought back, through meditation, to grave and serious habits. We have seen great criminals, delivered by a sudden revolution from habits of crime, give themselves to excellence with a zeal and courage unknown to other men—finding in the remembrance of their past excesses the most powerful spur to carry them on in their progress.

There is, in truth, a profound and sincere sentiment in repentance ; it freshens all the springs of the soul ; it gives an insatiable desire to grow better. Sickness does not aspire more eagerly after health, than repentance aspires after virtue ; it is an exile who longs for his native land ; it is an orphan inquiring for his mother.

If we can rise up so nobly out of crime, if we can go forth so much the more animatedly to do good, shall we hesitate to shake off the yoke of little weaknesses, and dray advantage from the faults of every day? Two primary conditions are necessary for this, it is true ;—it is necessary candidly to acknowledge to ourselves the fault committed ; it is necessary to retract, to expiate it, not by a speculative disavowal, exempt from effort and pain, but by a resolution of the will, which already repairs, because it engages us to repair the fault effectively when the occasion offers. It is necessary also, above all, to soothe the internal agitation, which accompanies the fault, and is redoubled when it is recognised. Let us not be deceived about this : in the sad impression which this recognition gives us, there is something more than regret and remorse ; there is a cutting pain of self-love wounded on one of its most sensitive points, and constrained to give up a part of its dearest pretensions : we are not only discontented with ourselves, but humiliated ; and though we blame the fault we have committed, we are irritated to find ourselves fallen.—This is what we must first remedy. We must take away from the principle of repentance all which can adulterate its purity and freedom. Then its just bitterness will soon be converted into sweetness, and an unknown peace will rise up from the bosom of trouble.—We should taste, if we may so speak, the joys of moral convalescence. This inward, solitary, assiduous labor, which consists in repenting incessantly, and reestablishing order in ourselves, has something much less attractive, it is true, than the progressive merit towards improvement : it is the long fatigue to which we are condemned here below ; but it has a peculiar merit, pre-

cisely because its exercises have less charm, its effects less brilliancy. The necessity we are under of recommencing this work without cessation,—like the web of Penelope ; our want of power to free ourselves from the tribute we pay, every day, to the weakness of our nature, are among the trials to which virtue is subjected here below, by Providence. Virtue has found occasion of applying in this case a kind of patience which makes our very imperfection a means of progress ; for it accustoms us to recognise and accept the limits of our earthly condition ; it gives us a more forcible presentiment also of the future destiny which is at last to remove the limits against which virtue has struggled so perseveringly, and has repulsed without having been able to break.

The world holds of so little account the secret struggles of virtue in inward reformation that it often appreciates natural qualities above those which cost so much. It is perhaps because they do not believe firmly in virtue, that they cannot give entire confidence to the solidity of the reformation which is its work.

We draw more advantage from the faults committed by the excess and abuse of an estimable quality than from those which follow feebleness and impotence : we raise ourselves with more difficulty from those which degrade us, than from those which only lead us astray : we have most difficulty in repairing those which have been committed with reflection ; those which repentance most rarely effaces, are those which bear the characteristic of a cold calculation of self-interest ; those which are the most irremediable, are those by which we have lied to ourselves.

We sometimes defend ourselves in the faults committed in the presence of witnesses : self-love comes to our aid, and prolongs, aggravates and renders them fruitful : it not only puts an obstacle in the way of our acknowledging them, but it gives birth to the more fatal fault of satisfying ourselves. It is thus that we are more evil disposed towards those whom we have of-

fended, than towards those who have offended us ;—we hate for the evil we have done. Self-love and vanity are the principal obstacles which prevent us from profiting from the exposure of our faults ; and of all the damage which they cause us, this is not the least.

In this portion of self-education, of which the object is, to make the experience which has cost us so dear, at least fruitful, our first care should be directed towards attacking self-love and vanity, as the two guardians which, placed in advance of our faults, would protect, hide, defend, perhaps even flatter them.

We often find honest people who have the happiness of never failing, who conform themselves tranquilly to the principal precepts of virtue, who pay respect to prohibitions, who especially never go astray by excess of generous affections. They live according to rule, but their life is nearly barren in excellence ; they are stationary, immovable, satisfied with themselves ; they sleep, and are astonished to hear it said how difficult is the practice of virtue. They rather practise it as a trade, than embrace it as a vocation—like the subaltern ministers of the temple, who wander with a cold eye around the altar of sacrifice, doing their material office, astonished at the rapture and piety of the faithful :—it is true that he who sleeps does not sin. The honest people of whom we speak would be fortunate, perhaps, if some fault could one day draw them from their drowsiness, give them through repentance a more vigorous nature, disabuse them of the security, the pride, perhaps, which they feel in their moral mediocrity—and inspire them at length with the thought and desire of becoming better.

The experience of our faults is a luminous introduction to the knowledge of mankind, and also to the science which has for its object the conduct of life. It is the education of benevolence ; it makes us cherish more ardently the communion of the good ; it makes us better support communion with the imperfect : the sentiment of our imperfections brings us more near to them, disposes us to the affections we ought to bear to them

inspires us with condescension, and obtains for us, in return, a confidence more entire, on their part. When, pursued with regret for a fault committed, we have the happiness of meeting with a being touched by adversity, and the power of assisting him, it seems as if our conscience were solaced, that we have found the means of reconciling ourselves again with duty. The consolations which we can thus open to others, soothe our inward pains ; the tears of gratitude that fall upon us, heal our sick hearts of their wounds :—acts of charity are a beautiful and sweet expiation.

Of all the exercises of generosity, the most noble, the most extended, the most difficult, is that which carries to men useful assistance in moral maladies. But what physician will give useful directions, if not he who has himself experienced the evils he seeks to cure? From the remembrance of our faults we draw the most efficacious counsels, and find the secret of that language which may make them understood by others.


SECTION II.

DISCIPLINE OF EXTERNAL CIRCUMSTANCES.

CHAPTER I.

IMITATION AND EXAMPLE.

MAN continually receives influences from men and things, favorable or unfavorable to his moral progress ; and self-education should not consist in internal discipline, but should modify these external influences, either in themselves, or in their effects. The latter is especially necessary ; for it is not always



possible to change circumstances themselves, but the impressions which we receive are always in our power. We may prevent or throw off their injurious effects, or gather up and preserve the assistance they offer.

It is important, in this external education of ourselves, to distinguish what is really in our power, from what is absolutely independent of our efforts; and afterwards, to study the means of using well, and with effect, what power we have. Outward circumstances tend to develop both the love of excellence and self-government; therefore it is necessary to survey our outward circumstances, to observe this twofold result. Example offers to us the first and perhaps the most important of influences.

There is a singular analogy between the laws which govern the instinct of imitation, and those which govern habit. We do the actions we see others do, easily and promptly, without feeling it necessary to combine the plan or conceive the motives, the instinct of imitation taking place of reflection and will; and more than this, it becomes even a want which solicits us, an impulse which carries us away, unconsciously to ourselves, or in spite of ourselves. We might say, that the instinct of imitation is borrowed habit, and that habit is a sort of imitation, which consists in copying one's self.

But there is, in imitation, something superior to what is properly called habit; imitation supposes observation and a certain sympathy; habit is solitary as well as blind. Animals acquire imitation less often than habit; they only imitate the actions of their own species (with one remarkable exception, for when they live with men, many of them seem to follow their steps, as if men were given to them as guides). The faculty of imitation is different in different species, however. It obtains in man a complete development, because he has a spirit of observation so curious and investigating, and a principle of activity so indefatigable.

The province of imitation, like that of habit, is in external,

sensitive, organic life, and should reign there. In practice, it saves care, fatigue, and time, and renders, through participation, the experience acquired by a few, perhaps by one, common to a great number of individuals. It preserves concert in the multitude of individual movements. It produces uniformity in society, as habit produces constancy in individuals: it also produces a kind of perseverance, perpetuating itself through generations, by the tradition of example.

But the instinct of imitation, like mechanical habit, is simply an instrument of execution for external activity: it ought only to be employed in the sphere of application; anywhere else, it is only an obstacle. Imitation and habit are the great resources of those who cannot move or direct themselves; they compose for such persons an automatic life, and unite to impose chains upon them. We should not be astonished that so many people content themselves more or less with this kind of existence,—it is so very convenient. It dispenses with interior labor, soothes all uncertainty, renders us learned without study, regular without effort, and by clothing us in common forms, assures us beforehand of general approbation.

The instinct of imitation should not be allowed to invade the freedom of our moral faculties, for it would destroy them. It stifles both the love of excellence and self-government, substituting a blind principle for the voice of conscience, taking volition away from our actions, preventing choice, and enchainning liberty.

It is not enough, therefore, to choose good examples; it is also important how we use them, and what kind of instruction we draw from them.

Since the models of antiquity have been restored to literature and the arts, it has been continually repeated, 'Imitate the ancients;' and the crowd have believed that it was only necessary to chalk out modern works, upon the models of our ancestors, reproducing the same subjects, setting them in the same framework, observing the same proportions, and employ-

ing the same expedients. In vain the small number of superior minds have replied, 'Yes—we should imitate the ancients by going up to the same inspirations, and becoming what they were; daring like them to think for ourselves; like them being original, simple, ingenuous.' But few have understood them; it is for genius alone to *comprehend* them.

It is just so in morals. The novice in virtue should contemplate models, only to be penetrated with their spirit; not copying the actions of others, but discovering and borrowing their generous motives. They should enter into communication with the souls of the good, be penetrated with their spirit, learn from them to know themselves, to consult conscience rather than opinion, to possess their own merits, and consequently to act from themselves.

There are, then, two sorts of imitation, as there are two sorts of exercise; one passive and mechanical—the other active, free, reflective and fruitful; the first, needs only to see the example and to follow it; the second, meditates upon it and interprets it; and these two kinds of imitation act inversely.

The first, indifferent in its nature, is the channel of vice and error, as well as of what is laudable: and when virtue and truth confide their destiny to it, they lose their character; the one is despoiled of its merit, the other of its evidence.

The second kind of imitation chooses and discerns, taking examples as aids, not as chains, showing to generous souls all the extent of their liberty, and revealing to them all the secret of their strength. 'And I also am a painter!' said Corregio. So the noble spirit, yet ignorant of itself, at sight of the great models in the career of virtue, cries out, 'And I too am capable of excellence, and worthy to aspire after it!' Unknown faculties, which had slumbered within us, wait but a similar occasion to take a sudden spring: it is by the example of others, as in a mirror, that we learn to know ourselves: the noble actions that strike our eyes, reveal to us our true vocation,—a revelation which may perhaps influence the whole of our destiny.

If examples are studied in this spirit, we may draw from them three kinds of utility. In the first place, they facilitate and brighten our understanding of the notions of excellence, by offering a living definition of them. In the second place, they furnish a positive experience in regard to the means of success, the obstacles, and the resources, in the practice of excellence. Lastly, by a happy sympathy they communicate to our heart the sentiments of which they show the effect; exciting a generous emulation, that is to say, the ardent desire, at the same time with the confidence of equalling those who have preceded us, and perhaps of surpassing them: but these three kinds of utility exact also three conditions, which correspond to them.

1. It is not one isolated example, which can clearly and exactly define a moral notion. An isolated example may even deceive, more than instruct us; the idea, in becoming too confined, becomes false at the same time: every moral notion, personified and rendered sensible by example, is accompanied, in this particular case, by circumstances which are really extraneous and fortuitous: we may misunderstand as essential, what is only accessory and a part of the costume. It is necessary, therefore, to compare examples, in order to avoid particularizing the consequences which we might deduce from them: it is necessary to meet them in different situations, that the ideal may arise, just and true, always clear and distinct from the midst of contrasts. Let us gather, then, from the different regions of the earth, from different ages, the rich harvest offered us by the traditions of honorable lives. Let us beware of imprisoning virtue in too narrow conditions. Let us disengage it from that which belongs to individuals, to occasions, to places, and to times, that it may shine in its own true and immortal brightness; that it may appear, not as dependent on costume and manners, but as a great, eternal, universal law; not as a local institution, but as the endowment of humanity.

2. It is not only necessary to recur sometimes to examples which are at a distance from us, but it is necessary, in the va-

riety of them, that we should attend to those which are near, and which give us a picture of the circumstances in which we ourselves are placed. We do not well comprehend the thoughts and sentiments of those, who have little in common with our circumstances : we do not exactly know how to apply their motives ; and there are always pretexts for dispensing with following their tracks, and we are content with a theoretic admiration. It is well to read Plutarch, and to contemplate in the great personages of history the immortal traits, which characterize the heroism of virtue : they are for moral education what Homer is for poetical education ; but it is necessary to seek an experience more near and familiar, which, although it may not transport us so vividly into the region of the ideal, may teach us what we can put in practice, and inspire us with natural sentiments, which may be realized every day.

3. To be truly instructive, example ought to be complete ; that is to say, it ought to make known, not only the consequence, but the cause ; and not only the cause, but the concurrence of all the causes. It is not so difficult a thing to know what should be done, as *how* it is to be done : in showing the end, the route should be traced. In contemplating a virtuous action, we should discover also, what obstacles it has been necessary to conquer, by what means it has triumphed, by what progressive and often slow preparation it has been accomplished. An action detached from a whole life may shine with great glory, but it may have been only a happy accident, a sudden and passing inspiration : it is the whole of a virtuous life, which it is useful to study ; it is in that we may see how actions spring from character, and are linked together.

The imagination is excited by extraordinary examples ; for the marvellous of moral nature has a powerful and just charm, which seems also to belong to us. And we need not fear to raise our eyes to these great models, which, standing in the midst of the course of ages, attest all the dignity of human nature ; but we ought to console ourselves by this spectacle.

We are so surrounded by common things, we feel so much our own weakness, it is well to measure the height to which virtue can rise, even if it is only to know how far off we are. But we admire, and most easily praise the merit which is not for our use, and which we believe we are dispensed from acquiring: the enjoyment we experience in contemplating it, is purely gratuitous. Thus we applaud, at the theatre, those great acts of immolation to duty, which are models of the moral sublime, without drawing any consequences to our own life, and without thinking to draw any common applications. But we must also cherish those examples which are real, and which, being more modest, are found at our very door, guides for the journey which we are called on to undertake, and which we would accomplish.

It is useful, lastly, to take examples in situations which offer most obstacles and least succor. The virtues of the rich are less eloquent to those who suffer the trial of adversity. Poverty has its models of heroism, the sight of which rewards, an hundred fold, while it instructs, those who go to relieve it. How many times have they blushed in considering the patience, the resignation, the sweetness of those abandoned and despised sufferers! Would that we could conduct to this spectacle, the youths whom we instruct by books; that we could open to their attention the gates of these humble asylums! Would that those who, prepared by education, sustained by the opinion of the world, having but few trials to undergo, and so many aids to assist them, could come and look! Would they dare in the midst of all the enjoyments of life to raise systematic doubts concerning human liberty and the reality of virtue? Would that those would come, who, in contesting for our nature its best prerogatives, sometimes affect nevertheless so much pride! Would that they could see, and be humbled! Understanding all that there is great, true, and serious in human destiny, they might find here the remedy of their frivolity, and an answer to their sophisms.

In the first ages of civilisation, people ranked among the demigods those who had been signalized by great and beautiful actions. They supposed that these heroes had received a nearer consanguinity with the divine nature; they loved to place their examples under the safeguard of public worship, to add to their authority all the power of religion: it was a sort of worship instituted in honor of virtue. How has Christianity extended and purified these views! It has chosen models in all the countries of the earth, in all conditions of society; it has taught the world to honor the obscure virtues; its heroes have risen up from the humblest professions; they have appeared in the robes of indigence; and pride and frivolity have been constrained to prostrate themselves in their presence. It has found examples for each of us, and especially for those who have most need of succor.

The vulgar draw moral rules from the authority of examples, while example has no other real authority than that of the rule which it is destined to bring to light. Often, without subscribing exactly to this prejudice, we conclude, nevertheless, by induction. We suppose, that all which virtuous men do, may serve as a model, or at least as an excuse. This is an error: good people are not always consistent; they have their anomalies; they have their errors, which their good intentions must redeem; some things in them are connected with their whole lives and their very virtues: it is a privilege which they acquire. Be as good as they, before pretending to participate with them in this privilege.

The spirit of contradiction seems to have been placed by the side of the disposition to mechanical imitation, as if for an antidote. The sentiment of our liberty, and the felt necessity of independence, are innate, and, when they are not entirely stifled, react against the usurpation which tends to enslave us. Also, they manifest themselves so much the more, as the attempt to enslave us discovers itself more openly. Thus, the spirit of contradiction seems to have been more particularly

imparted to the feeble, who, when menaced, find in it protection; when oppressed, vengeance. If a feeble man cannot defend his liberty in essential things, he will console himself by little things; if he cannot resist acts, he will censure motives; and we often see this contrast of a feebleness, which follows example, with a freedom of mind, which, in condemning this same example, recompenses itself for its slavery, united in the same character. However, the spirit of contradiction serves badly, sometimes, the cause for which it is employed: it seeks, not what is best in itself, but what is opposed to that which exists: it does not tend towards the end, but is content to go out of the common route. Its true office is to criticise, only that it may prepare for an impartial examination; to break the chains of instinctive imitation, that it may bestow on the soul that free activity, which, at last, is exercised in reflective imitation.

Pride also repulses examples, but it is because it refuses to recognise all superiority; and moral superiority, being the most real, must importune it more than any other. It disdains aids; it wishes to isolate itself. Truth and goodness themselves are wrong in the eyes of the proud, if they come from another. They grow capricious and strange in seeking to be original. Those who reject example, are ordinarily those to whom it would be most necessary. One of its great advantages is precisely to serve as a remedy to pride. Happy are they, who have left us this rich heritage; who, in preceding us, have smoothed our way! May they continue in the midst of us, venerated and subjects of gratitude! they were our true instructors and masters. It is delightful, it is soul-sustaining to live in this illustrious company! We find in it entire security. Our inquietudes are calmed; our doubts dissipated: fatigued at the sight of the world and the sense of our own weakness, isolated perhaps on earth, we find in them the friends whose communion sustains, encourages, consoles us.

CHAPTER II.

FRIENDS AND ENEMIES.

FRIENDSHIP is acknowledged to be the greatest of all treasures, necessary to complete our pleasures, and powerful to console our sufferings: but few have estimated its value as a moral power. Indeed, it has sometimes led us to dispense with new efforts, and lulled us to sleep in its delightful communion—our self-love being flattered, our pretensions acquiesced in, our weakness indulged. More than this,—self-interest corrupts it, and it becomes the accomplice of our indolence and our faults. With our friends we are always disposed to believe ourselves better than we are; a mistake which is an obstacle to our becoming better in reality.

In the universal plan, association is always a principle of fruitfulness; and is not friendship a great moral association? Is it not destined to make virtue germinate in the bosom of the affections?

If we wish friendship to be for us what it ought to be,—a great moral influence—we should seek friends superior to ourselves. Those who are ambitious of wealth or power, do this. In attaching ourselves to those who are stronger than we are, we are guarded from two dangers, being preserved from indolence on the one side, and defended from presumption on the other. Elevated minds are naturally drawn to communicate with those whose superiority they feel; a kind of instinct reveals to them the important truth, which we are here endeavouring to establish: they perceive in the image of this superiority, what they are destined to become themselves. Intimacy with those who are better than we are, unites to the influence of example, and to the confidence which springs from the presence of aid, a new and powerful kind of emulation, springing from our desire to be united with what we love: it gives nobleness to sentiments, ar-

dor to will, and confidence to action. Happy is he who has found in a friend a model, mingling affection with esteem, admiration, and respect.* The wish of Plato is accomplished, and virtue is personified. In proportion as virtue is better known, it becomes more beautiful; in proportion as it admits us to familiarity, it engages us the more in its worship; for we love better those whom we can honor.

We ordinarily seek friends who resemble us, for the same reason that we desire in friendship a means of repose and a sanction of habit. But if we wish to find friendship a means of education, we should also, on the other hand, discover friends, who abound in what we want, and have the qualities corresponding to our deficiencies. Then we may make instructive comparisons and advantageous exchanges. Habitual contradictions will be useful, although inconvenient; it will keep us awake, preserve us from slavish routine, and exercise a salutary control. Nature indicates this, in founding on an absolute contrast, that friendship which it has itself instituted, the most perfect and the most durable of all, marriage. The moral conditions of friendship, therefore, are nearly the inverse of the external conditions, in which there should be the greatest equality.

The intimacy of friendship can be established only between two persons: it is a marriage of souls, which does not admit of polygamy. The heart has secrets it can only confide to one,—devotion and tributes, which cannot be shared: we can give ourselves wholly only to one person; the communication cannot be entirely absolute, into which a third is received. Friendship is a preference and a choice; it proceeds therefore by reduction. Religious morality only confirms the wish of sentiment, in excluding plurality from the conjugal union, the most perfect of all friendships. But it is not well, on the other

* But, in this case, will not every one be seeking, and no one find a friend? The good man always esteems himself less than he is, and this suffices to resolve the difficulty.

hand, to shut ourselves up, exclusively in communion with an only friend; for then friendship would fail of one of its ends, which consists in opening the heart to the social affections, and gradually preparing the reign of benevolence. Moreover, in this prolonged *tête-à-tête*, we should end by copying each other, till we could no longer have any exchange to make; we should be blinded by each other; we should honestly flatter each other. It is important to vary companions and examples. In multiplying relations, we see ourselves in various lights; we gather more complete influences, and save ourselves from introducing personal feeling into our affections: we are less exposed to partial judgments, to exaggerations, to adopting the faults of our friends.

The compact of that holy friendship, of which mutual progress is the object, rests upon two conditions: namely, sincere and perfect confidence, and severe mutual watchfulness.

We involuntarily place ourselves in a favorable light to our friends; for how can we have courage to compromise a treasure of so great price as friendship, by discovering to them what we fear to avow to ourselves? Indeed, in the moments of this delightful communion, we are under an illusion ourselves, forgetting the weaknesses to which we yield in our hours of solitude. But benefit from our friends, as from our physician, depends on our confessions. Confessions have a magic power in preparing the means of cure for maladies of the soul; they aid us in being sincere with ourselves; they are the commencement of a generosity, which purifies the will, and gives a spring to courage. Every confession is an implied promise of an attempt to reform. Some faults are half corrected, when we have confessed them without disguise; and what is remarkable, these are precisely the faults, which are the most difficult to reach, because they hide themselves in the depth of our souls.

Such is, for instance, that subtle self-love, which exerts all its skill in concealing itself from all eyes, that it may satisfy it-

self more surely. In practising perfect candor in our habitual intercourse, we are preserved from certain blemishes, which do not dare to display themselves. How fortunate a habit is this, which guarantees purity of heart and simplicity—at the same time giving us comfort and putting us at ease ! But how could we incessantly submit to the sacrifices which simplicity and purity require of us, unless friendship were near, to reassure us, and to temper our self-reproaches ?

Mutual vigilance demands from friendship not only criticism but encouragement. The true friend is a benevolent censor, who sustains while he represses us, consoles while he corrects us ; whose severity is full of tenderness.

But it is difficult to fulfil this second condition of friendship ; for, on the one hand, we would rather confess our faults than have them anticipated by another ; and, on the other hand, it is more agreeable to notice the merits of our friends than their faults, to praise than to blame them. Thus, how inefficiently we fulfil this duty towards others, and how feeble is our gratitude to those who discharge it to us !

The communication of intimate friendship, then, is the school of self-knowledge. The confidential out-pourings of intimacy aid us essentially : language is a mirror in which our own thought is reflected ; and feeling, in being communicated, is developed, and defined : we perhaps never entirely understand our internal secrets until we have confided them to others.

The regard of a virtuous friend, if we meet it at the critical moment, suffices to preserve us from weakness, and to inspire us with courageous resolution. It is a light which seems to come from Heaven, and descend to the bottom of our souls. Constantly in the presence of our friends, their esteem will be for us strength ; the desire of making them enjoy, of making their hearts leap at our good actions, will be a still farther encouragement ; and of what will it not render us capable ? We would devote ourselves to their happiness. Can we bring them a purer felicity than our own improvement ?

Our conviction of a truth seems to redouble in our minds, when we have found it in another's mind : it is a testimony that we have thought correctly. Honorable sentiments acquire more power when we find them participated. It is the nature of all the impressions which carry in themselves a character of harmony, to be pleased with the concert which repeats them, and to receive a new energy in meeting their own image. It is a second harmony, joined to the first, confirming and deepening it. The truth found by two has more vividness ; a good action done in companionship produces a livelier joy. When we meditate with a friend, apart, on that which belongs to excellence, does not virtue rise before us more beautiful and majestic ? If this sacred alliance is formed in the flower of youth, how freshly spring up all lawful hopes from the bosom of all generous sentiments ! This is the period of life in which friendship is most useful, and in which it has most charms : and Providence thus seems to take pleasure in inviting to it those, to whom it may give most assistance. When contracted in view of the common end of destiny, friendship becomes an alliance of the whole life. United to become better, these beings will advance together in the stormy and difficult career of terrestrial existence. They will shield, they will encourage, they will recompense each other ; extending to each other the hand in the midst of precipices, showing to each other the palm of victory. They have placed all their merits in common, and their affection increases through their mutual gratitude. Is one of them touched by adversity, or struck down by the injustice of man ? He becomes more dear to the other ; friendship preserves to him those true blessings which cannot be taken away, and absolves him from the unjust decrees of opinion. The events and passions, which are in agitation around them, do not enfeeble the ties which bind them together ; for these ties are placed under an inviolable safeguard. Not even absence can really separate them. For their souls have a centre, where they again find and understand

each other. They go on, therefore, with the same step. What have I said? Perhaps one of them has accomplished the task and disappeared, and the succours of friendship have ceased. No; not all the succours of friendship have ceased: he who is condemned to survive, is improved by his very grief; his soul, widowed for a time, nourishes itself on remembrance and hopes; on the tomb of him whom he has loved, he meditates upon his example and his counsels, with veneration, and a religious tenderness. In the voice which calls him to *be good*, he recognises the voice of a friend. Fine actions are the monuments he would raise to his memory.

In an entire circle of friends, there is one who must remain the last. To what solitude is the heart given up, which was created for the affections! What support shall be found to assist him? What support? If he has known how to profit in the school of friendship, he will comprehend, that there is, in the path of progress, a more elevated point than that in which we enjoy intimate affection, a point fortunately reserved for those who are already far onward in their career: he will comprehend that there is a secret heroism of heart in the fidelity to excellence, which perseveres when consolations and encouragements have been taken away, when we can no longer find a recompense in the approbation of those we have loved. This deprivation of all visible assistance calls us to exercises almost sublime; it leads us to touch the summits of virtue.

Independently of the aids received in the communication of friendship, there are others, which have their uses, although they are not so pleasant, and are even mixed with bitterness. Our enemies lend us assistance, or at least we may borrow assistance from them. They serve to correct whatever was too complaisant and soft in friendship; to make up for the adulations which are so liable to corrupt us. They afford an abundant supplement to the instructions which introduce us to the knowledge of ourselves. From our friends we may learn our good qualities; from our enemies, our defects. We can

trust ourselves to the latter for this discovery, which we should perhaps never know how to have made without their aid. Our self-love will have, it is true, the resource of accusing these witnesses of partiality; but if we are sincere, we shall almost always find something true in the exaggerated reproaches of enmity.

The presence of an enemy awakens our vigilance: we become severe towards ourselves, that we may prevent the just severity of others.

It is then well, for some reasons, to have enemies: it may be even necessary. It is true, we are not obliged to be the enemy of any one; but we may often be called upon to have adversaries. We meet them, not only in the struggle of private interests, but, inevitably, in devoting ourselves to the cause of truth and justice;—and it is especially in this last case, that adversaries become implacable enemies.

The fear of creating enemies, sometimes produces a culpable looseness. Thus, we often compromise duty, when, in fulfilling it, it is necessary to resist the passions or strike down the prejudices of others; too often defending innocence timidly and feebly, and leaving pernicious maxims to circulate freely; for, we say, shall we compromise our repose for abstractions? We tremble, especially, before pride and intolerance, because, of all the passions, they are the most irritable; yet these are especially what demand to be repressed with vigor, chastised with severity, and which ought to find the good man the most inflexible.* We hope to escape by some concessions. But the more we grant, the more we find ourselves constrained to give up.

The wise man avoids, when serving the cause of virtue, to employ the arrows which wound persons: he reserves his severities for principles and actions. But what care soever he

* The disciple of Jesus Christ, cannot but remark that these are vices which found his Master the most unyielding. He gave no quarter to the systematic mental oppression of the Scribes and Pharisees.—*Translator.*

takes, he will always find people, who will perceive themselves censured, who will take to themselves the blame, and who are wounded to hear the virtues praised which they do not possess. The just man defending innocence, always avoids to mingle, even with the just indignation of an honest soul, accents of human passion; but oppressive violence is irritated beforehand with a moderation which condemns it. Persecutors do not pardon those, who refuse to become the instruments of persecution; they even bear ill will to those, who do not approve them, especially if they are good. What then is to be done to escape these animosities? Even impartiality and moderation, far from always defending us from enmity, draw upon us the hatred of men, who are blinded by their passions. What is to be done? It remains to accept this hatred as an honor, to disdain it with a modest and serene pride. There are enemies, whose attacks should give us a more vivid consciousness of our merits. The public man should applaud himself for his own firmness, and for the integrity of his character, if he is the butt of the clamors of intrigue. To what fury will he not expose himself, who, called to unmask hypocrisy, shall have fulfilled this duty with a courageous frankness? A magistrate, as we have often seen, has not an enemy more bitter, than he who has vainly tried to corrupt him. It is impossible to be sincere, without wounding some vanity; just, without offending some pretensions; generous, without attacking selfishness. We have remarked—and unfortunately the remark is well founded—that the most unjust enmity will injure its object, in a degree, in public opinion. Hence arises new instruction. This experience will teach us not to rest upon opinion, and to measure its value; it will teach us the last sacrifice which duty claims; it will constrain us to seek and find in the testimony of conscience the true secret of repose and strength.

Thus we find friendship especially favors the love of excellence; enmity, the exercise of self-government.

CHAPTER III.

SOLITUDE AND SOCIETY.


SOCIAL intercourse is a primary means of education for man. It is by this intercourse that he is delivered from the savage and brutal life of the senses, and introduced into the life of the affections and of thought; and the same influence accompanies him as he enters into the moral life.

As language, instituted in the first place for reciprocal communication, becomes an instrument by which each individual develops, forms, and fixes thought and judgment; in observing others, we unconsciously study ourselves as in a mirror; even the differences we discover instructing us, by multiplying companions and contrasts. Thus, social intercourse becomes a school for reflection. In discovering what we are, we also perceive what we may become; and, called to choose in presence of the future, we are led to consult ourselves. The struggle of interests and pretensions brings out the sentiment of justice; benefits received, teach gratitude, and thus we are led from equity to love; moreover, the exchange of affection teaches devotion, and devotion, the generosity which introduces virtue.

How profound are the designs of Providence in thus constituting the laws of human nature, putting the spur of a want wherever there is a means of progress! The first of these means is the social state, which is first a necessity, and then an attraction. Our faculties make progress by exercise, and activity is first a sense of want which seeks exercise, society afterwards preserving the movement, by offering infinitely varied opportunities of satisfaction: infancy and youth have especial need of support and guidance, and they are adorned with graces, that charm and attract all hearts; love springing from

being beloved. Affection thus excited towards those who are entering life, protects them ; and by its benignant countenance teaches the lesson of love, by means of which they are softened and touched, and learn to understand ; and the young themselves, pressed on by the necessity of being cherished, invoke and solicit affection, as a great object of life, without knowing the assistance it will lend them. They soon, however, learn the nature and value of this assistance, and feeling that they must merit esteem, if they would preserve such blessings, they would do something to obtain it ; they would respond to the sentiment of which they are the objects, and in which they find a support and protection. What confidence it inspires to see ourselves beloved ! And what an argument may be derived from the above views, that those who have the care of youth should be good ! By this alone they give knowledge and strength. But it is not to the morning of life alone that this influence is extended. Throughout our moral education, if we know how to concur with it, by the cooperation which it requires, this influence may be beneficial ; but it can be modified and consequently adulterated, as our relations become extended and complicated.

‘ Every time that I have been among men, I have returned more imperfect,’ says a sage, who was too severe, perhaps, towards society and towards himself. He was a solitary. When a man goes from solitude into the world, he runs the danger of being drawn into too severe judgments upon the world and himself. We cannot find realized in society the images we have arbitrarily formed in a contemplation wholly ideal ; we cannot apply rigorously the absolute rules which we had drawn up in the regions of abstraction. Thrown into the midst of society, we are struck by the contrast ; we encounter a thousand obstacles, which we have not experienced, or suspected, in our solitary life. The dissipation of mind, alone, will be a great trouble ; having no longer our customary aids, we become disconcerted. It was easy to speculate on perfection in a



state of tranquillity, and far from danger. We perhaps believed ourselves to have attained it, until we were put to the proof, till reality came, and labor commenced; now we find fault with the world, from not remarking that we have doubtless carried into the world an imperfect and feeble virtue. Do not let us accuse other men of our own faults; but reflect, that we, perhaps, may carry with us and preserve dispositions by which we may escape peril and gather advantages.

The social inclination has something in it eminently moral; it puts in motion many precious faculties; it opens the soul, and makes it expand with many honorable sentiments. How solemn, touching, and noble is the impression which we receive of the dignity of humanity, when we find ourselves in the midst of an assembly of men of different conditions, with whom we have no point of contact and no collision of interests. It is the same kind of impression, more extended but less vivid, that we receive in the midst of our own family. We are strengthened by the great alliance; and generous sentiments take the ascendancy rapidly and surely. Such an impression is often received when we mingle with the crowd, on those days set apart to sacred rest. The impression is deepened, if this assembly is in the midst of the simple scenes of nature; or if its attention is directed towards some grave and majestic work of art; or if it is gathered round the statue of a great man; or if it fills a solemn temple;—in short, if some moral or religious thought is present with all. The soul is penetrated with emotions of a strong and elevated character. This is the natural influence which we should constantly receive from social intercourse, if it were not adulterated by the hostile dispositions, which spring out of our rivalries, and our secret desires of invading and subduing others. But the hostilities of which we are the object do not as much interfere with it, as those of which we are the authors. The wounds that the first cause us, are envenomed by ourselves; we seem to take delight in inflaming them; we allow the envy that we might des-

pise to irritate us; the criticism that might enlighten, to wound us; and we are mortified even by indifference. Our self-love, especially, wages with the self-love of others a silent and concealed but continual and implacable war. We complain of being carried away by the influence of example; but we give it the power that it exercises over us. On examination, we shall find that the examples so easily followed, meet a secret propensity within, and that we have a secret interest in following the tracks of others: this happens, especially, in regard to those whom we would flatter; for there is no adulation more delicate.

We complain of the extreme corruption of the world, of the discouragement and sadness that it makes us feel; but we should guard against declamation, and appreciate things according to their just value. At our entrance into the world, we generally presume too much upon the goodness of other men, and so require too much; afterwards we fall into the opposite exaggeration, through the effect of the surprise which our mistake has made us experience. If we are sincere, we shall acknowledge that the vices with which we especially reproach the world, are those by which our vanity, our repose, or our pretensions have suffered; and that our judgment has a little the character of revenge. We are disconcerted with ourselves, and wreak this discontent upon others: we look at them through the medium of a chagrin, which springs from being ill at ease. We have hardly studied to discover and to note what society may contain of hidden virtues, of pure and just sentiments. Besides, how great is the weakness of our reason, if morality loses its authority in our eyes, because it loses its credit in the world! Is worldly success necessary, as a sanction or a proof? Does it become an illusion, because some frivolous men misconceive it? If so, let us go upon the theatre of the world, as generous defenders of this misconceived cause, instead of flying, and yielding to pusillanimous fears. In seeking to make it honored and attractive, we shall better feel all that it con-

tains of the true, beneficial, and celestial ; we shall feel the necessity of supporting our defence by our character. The progress of philosophy and science is indebted chiefly to the controversies that truth has encountered ; each party has gathered new truths springing out of the discussions ; morality may draw similar fruits from similar collisions. The good man will confirm the solidity of his principles by this noble contest ; he will learn to proclaim aloud the sacred maxims of duty in the face of human passion, and to do good for goodness sake ; he will be inflamed with new ardor for morality, when he sees it misunderstood, exiled, persecuted ; he will come from the field where he has devoted himself in its cause, more manly, great, and independent.

The honor of carrying this kind of devotion to heroism is granted to but few ; it is a favor that Providence has reserved to those privileged souls who appear on earth as the glorious witnesses of eternal truth. But each of us, in his own circle, may participate in this glorious vocation ; each of us, in struggling against prejudice, vicious passion, indifference, and frivolity, may become a confessor of morality, fulfil a kind of apostleship, confirm it by his success and sacrifices ; and gather new strength in learning to resist.

Society, which subjects us to numerous restraints, and to various contradictions, also gives a favorable exercise to self-government. We resign ourselves to trial, but generally disdain to draw advantage from it ; spitefully constraining ourselves to make the sacrifice to interest, to ambition, and especially to self-love, instead of making it a means of progress. We might voluntarily do, what we do against our will, and sincerely accept opposition, instead of limiting ourselves to a control of our words and manners. If we could employ it as an exercise of our virtue, the imposed constraint would become much less painful, and we should better attain the effect that we expect from it, since we should support it more gracefully. The life of anchorites has doubtless some striking self-denial ; but in

the midst of society (which seems to offer only dissipation and pleasure), there is also self-denial for those, who know how to understand and use it; and though less singular, it is not always the less meritorious.

Society, then, is more favorable to our progress than we are willing to allow: perhaps we would excuse ourselves for not profiting by the aid which it offers us. It is true, that the undertaking is difficult; but these difficulties are among the conditions of its advantages. Hence we should not only be mature and strong, when we go upon the theatre, but we should continue to strengthen and mature ourselves. Society is a sea, and we should not embark on it without provision; a field of combat, to which we should not present ourselves without arms. We should have a strong foundation of benevolence towards persons, and severity in principles, and should renew this foundation continually; for it is that which society tends continually to break down. It is necessary to nourish and to reanimate ourselves incessantly by meditation; for society is dissipation renewed in a thousand forms, and an immense tumult. We must enter on it self-possessed, for it tends to take from us every thing that is original. We must also grow unceasingly, for obstacles are multiplied unceasingly. In order to prevent, in their origin, the painful impression that we receive in intercourse with the world, we should watch over ourselves, and take care, lest disorder and agitation should be introduced into our moral faculties, by the agitation which reigns around us; for this is the commencement of all the moral maladies, whose contagion threatens us. Thus, the good resolutions on which we had been nourished are dissipated; the plans we have conceived are forgotten; we are carried away without perceiving it, surprised without defence; every day we go back some steps, and with no design of corrupting ourselves, yield to corruption unawares. If a sudden ray of light comes to avert the peril and reveal the losses already experienced, our agitation increases through regret; and opposition being raised between the old sentiment of

ed, and the feeble habits just contracted, confusion is soon at
acme, and we finish by turning away our thoughts from our-
ves, to escape a troublesome spectacle. So a want of atten-
n brings gradually the loss of fortune. The wise man in the
st of the world, where he is unperceived, and where he is
d to be unknown, free and peaceful in his obscurity, atten-
e and self-possessed in the midst of agitation, requiring little
d having little to defend, an impartial witness, an indulgent
ge,—observes, without allowing himself to be carried away.
s the scrutinizing glance of science finds an inexhaustible mine
discoveries in the scenes of nature, whose aspect distracts
a superficial eye of ignorance ; so the wise man finds in socie-
a multitude of instructions. Like the scientific man, he can
so turn his observations to useful results. What experience
ne scene of human life may offer to him, who knows how to
udy it ! How many circumstances might turn the frivolous
an into himself, and draw him to the most profound reflec-
ions, if he consented for an instant to connect with their causes
he effects around him ! In the midst of so many wanderings
and errors, the wise man perceives the part which belongs to
frivolity, to ignorance, to weakness, and thus measures all the se-
riousness of their consequences. He discovers in them, per-
haps, natural qualities, turned in a wrong direction, or in dispro-
portion. He looks upon corruption to see in its painful conse-
quences, its perhaps hidden origin, and upon intrigue, to esti-
mate more justly its baseness, even in its success, by consider-
ing the means which has led to it. He constrains himself to
see vice, perhaps triumphant, in order to know how to detest
it as it deserves ; but he finds out also those obscure and hum-
ble virtues, which fill his heart with joy. The wise man passes
through the world without confounding himself with it ; self-
distrustful, yet courageous, he goes on with vigilance, and he
leaves it with satisfaction, all moral truths having acquired new
force and innumerable corollaries.

Fear, and a disgust with the world, often seek solitude.

The most diverse, even the most contrary causes, inspire the want of it ; but the expectation which leads to it is not always satisfied. The timid seek in it a refuge against dangers they cannot face ; the tender and delicate, against the arrows that wound them ; those deceived by cruel misunderstandings, try to forget society ; inexperience shuts itself up as in a haven from storms ; grief buries itself as in a tomb ; melancholy imagination hopes to find solace or liberty : the wicked and the innocent alike seek solitude ; the former to expiate their crimes, when tormented by remorse—the latter to taste more freely celestial and pure happiness. In consequence of the storms caused by violent passions, dejection, prudence, the reaction of violent will, bring to solitary life characters which seem least fitted for it. Not only ambition and vanity, when disappointed, are driven into solitude, egotistical misanthropy, all unsocial humors, demand less what it can give than mere isolation. They are dragged into it, perhaps, to be punished. Wisdom also sighs after solitude, seeking retreat as the sanctuary of meditation, and finding in it the calmness and independence necessary to regulate the moral faculties. Lofty souls love retirement, because all their elevated thoughts and sentiments may be developed there, and they can better enjoy themselves.

But the influence which solitude exercises, depends upon the motives which lead to it, the dispositions which are carried into it, and the manner in which we use it.

We have spoken of the advantages of solitude : we must now speak of its dangers ; especially we must insist upon the conditions that solitude requires, in order to be profitable,—indeed, in order not to be fatal.

Feebleness, in seeking solitude, destroys its resources, by losing every opportunity of exercising courage. We often find within, more terrible enemies than those without, with less means to escape or combat them. These enemies still pursue their victim, and, taking him captive, fall upon him. We hope for

repose, but fall into exhaustion, or wander in delirium. We hope for consolation, but we have deprived ourselves of activity and of beneficence, the truest consolations; we flatter ourselves that we shall gather instruction, but we see ourselves plunged into darkness, and soon the darkness is peopled with a thousand phantoms. Solitude is useful only to him, who has a sincere desire of becoming better: miserable is he, who imprisons himself with his passions, without being resolved to subdue them.

But it is not sufficient to enter retirement, even with the right disposition of soul; it is necessary to be provided with aliment for the mind and the heart; otherwise we run the risk of finding ourselves in a desert, where we shall perish with inanition. In order to draw from retirement the advantages which it promises, the moral faculties must have acquired a certain degree of energy. Otherwise we shall soon be fatigued with the monotony of the objects and continuity of situation, and we shall fall into lethargy. We must be mild and amiable, in order to make the best use of solitude. We must be serene, we must be to ourselves an easy host, not a ferocious jailer. We must have a constant and well-ordered activity and a wise self-distrust, in order to prevent illusions, idle speculations, blind presumption, and pride. Without rules, limitations, and vigilance, the liberty of solitude will become a peril; dogmatism and the exaggeration of a false enthusiasm will germinate; the virtues will be mixed with the passions, and imbibe their vehemence. We shall grow excessively severe, both towards others and ourselves; we shall pursue a chimerical perfection, and at the same time unconsciously become accomplices of enterprises the most fatal to mankind: thus solitude may become either a severe school, in which the moral education is finished, or an abyss, in which happiness, reason and virtue are swallowed up. There have not only sprung from it the greatest discoveries of genius and the most beneficent displays of

eminent character, but it has nourished also those terrible passions whose excesses have astonished mankind.*

Solitude is therefore not only useful but difficult ; it requires proper preparation and precautions ; and, although indispensable, is not a complete and sufficient education. Doubtless it alone can give to the love of excellence all its energy, to reflection all the profoundness of which our nature is capable ; to the internal virtues relating to self-communion, the highest degree of developement ; to self-government all the authority which it may receive from contemplation and self-knowledge ; and to the heroism of virtue its most substantial aliment. But protracted solitude will deprive us of the aids of experience, of virtuous activity, and of the useful influence which self-government draws from the shock of external obstacles. We shall arrive more promptly and easily to a partial perfection, very well, doubtless, for those whose duties lie in a confined sphere ; but we shall not so well attain to that general perfection, which, embracing all applications, is the destination of those whose duties call them to spread themselves abroad. A regimen of continued solitude may be useful, but it is an exception. Occasional solitude is the rule for most men. Alternate retirement and society is for moral progress what the mixture of theory and observation is for the progress of the sciences. Solitude has its exaggerations, as theory its hypotheses. Solitude and theory may gather fruits for themselves ; but their true and legitimate employment should be to prepare for the intercourse of the world and the arts of observation : deprived of the instru-

* Estimable philosophers have conceived the idea of employing absolute retreat as a means of correction for great criminals, and of employing it also as a means of chastisement. This is a noble thought—to make the punishment the means of correcting crime. In the application of this means, however, we should consider to what characters this regimen is applied, and modify the discipline according to circumstances. We should take care that absolute solitude do not become a fatal idleness, and that there be a proper proportion of bodily labor, and a course of reading favorable to salutary reflections.

ment of elaboration, the latter are only dissipation of heart and empiricism of intellect.

Do you fear solitude? This is an infallible sign that it is necessary to you : you have not learnt to know yourself ; and this again is a sign that you have a malady of soul, which solitude may discover to you, and perhaps will cure. With a reason strong, and a heart burning to do good, is life before you? Then go into solitude, and prepare the means of usefulness. Are you called upon to take some important resolution? Are you placed in unexpected and difficult circumstances? Go into solitude, and consult your strength, foresee and combine your plans of conduct. Have you seen much of life? In solitude you can put in order your painful experiences, and returning to the world you may apply and prove the labors of retirement. Solitude suits especially both youth and old age. But the serious drama of middle life must have its intervals. There must be resting places in the career. Go into solitude on the evening and the morning of every great event of your life.

Do you wish to receive all the utility both of solitude and of society? Endeavour, when in society, to preserve an inward solitude, and in solitude, to create a world such as you will one day live in. Live also in society as if you would quit it to-morrow, and in retirement as if to-morrow you were to communicate with men, and to serve them.

CHAPTER IV.

PLAN OF LIFE.

THE love of power and fortune take every means to accomplish their ends, making everything in contact with them,—affections, relations, pleasures, events, the smallest circumstan-

ces, subservient. Why may we not apply the same method to accomplish our moral perfection, the most real of our interests, instead of neglecting it so strangely? In our life, the different parts have, morally speaking, no connexion; there is no design: the elements of excellence are thrown here and there at hazard, so that everything is fruitless, which might do us good, and everything injurious becomes still more dangerous. Through our want of precaution, what is acquired is dissipated: we are astonished at everything, because we have been improvident: nothing instructs us, because it is not in its right place.

This is not the place to inquire, whether school education has, in general, sufficient reference to the future situation of each individual; whether indeed it is really a cultivation of the faculties, tending to give them a harmonious developement. There would indeed be a great deal to say upon this subject: we can easily see what an influence a want of appropriateness may exercise on the ensuing life. When entering on the scene of things unprepared, we are the more disconcerted in proportion as we have labored hitherto: we are in the case of a traveller, who should receive for his guidance a map of a different country from that which he is to travel. But if, by a happy chance, school education should have given us the most appropriate preparation, we must yet do for ourselves what no instructor can do for us,—we must add to it our own labor, and make up beforehand a plan of conduct. By doing this well, we may even supply the defects of imperfect education.

To arrange the general plan of life, we must embrace the whole of our vocation at once, in a preliminary meditation. External circumstances, that we cannot control, we must accept as conditions. It requires some wisdom, however, to distinguish the circumstances, to which we must submit, from those which we can modify or overcome. We must examine, in the next place, what consequences, resulting from inevitable circumstances, are inevitable; for consequences often differ

accordingly as we check or second them. We can judge, then, what is possible for us. But, in accepting the necessary conditions of things, in which we can change nothing, we should separate the advantages and disadvantages, which we may turn aside or obtain. Here commences what is at our free disposal. Passing then to those external circumstances, which we can subject, we judge better the means of subjecting them effectually; we shall see how we can act upon them, and render them tributary to our progress. Thus necessity assigns to us bounds within which we are placed, that we may not exhaust ourselves in a useless struggle; and wisdom indicates to our hopes the sphere in which we may exercise prudence and courage. But if we cannot discern the boundaries of necessity and wisdom, we shall frequently either consume ourselves in agitation, fighting with necessity; or, by an unfortunate indolence, accept as necessity what we might prevent or change.

Necessity has not the same extent for all men, and it often happens, that its dominion is enlarged at the expense of that of wisdom. Circumstances originally in our power, become necessities by means of habit; our imprudence increases the number of these chains, and we often suffer forever the consequences of the error of a moment.

In the class of necessities, we rank all the circumstances which depend upon our birth, our temperament, the country to which we belong, its institutions, laws, usages, our family relations, the rank we occupy, &c.; also, the natural limitations of the faculties of the human race and of the individual. The circumstances more or less under our control are the choice of our profession, of our habitual relations, our connexions of intimacy, the employment of time, the regulation of expenses, the regimen of life, the direction given to our reading and conversation, &c. It will not be enough that all these contribute to our improvement: all these elements should harmonize with our necessary conditions; each should have its right place, its proper time, its appropriate measure and propor-

tion. This order will greatly facilitate our progress ; for extraordinary efforts are sometimes lost, from mere want of method and arrangement.

But in planning our conduct, like the general who plans his campaign, we cannot foresee everything, and it will be dangerous to think we have foreseen everything. Every day the course of events will explain what was before uncertain, change what existed, open an unexpected future. At the principal epochs of life we ought to resume the same labor, completing and rectifying our plan, according to the instructions of experience and the new state of things. At certain times we must look back upon our route. At these times it is essential to put the past and future face to face, and to make the revision and examination of the first conduce to the provisions of the second ; for this is the peculiar office of moral meditations. We need not go to books for subjects of meditation ; daily experience and self-inspection indicate what are the defects and the virtues, which we should take for our texts, and what it is important for us to consider. We might say of some preachers that they seem to preach for the absent, rather than for those who hear them ; and, in like manner, we often meditate upon virtues which we are not called upon to exercise, while we are on the eve of needing light and strength, which we neglect to provide for ourselves. In short, our moral recollections should be subjected to a regular plan, and the plans of detail should have reference to the general plan ; that every day may gather the fruits of the preceding day, or prepare the fruitlessness of the day that is to succeed. Benjamin Franklin has given, in his Memoirs, a remarkable example of the application of such a system to the conduct of life. The example is the more useful, as it is accompanied by the results which its author gathered from it. It has authority, in proportion to his simplicity and rectitude. But we must combine this system each in our own way, and according to our character and situation. There is no universal archetype, which is complete, or which

can be used by all. Any plan is good, which is adapted to our wants, if it is methodically conceived, and perseveringly executed. There are two virtues, which Benjamin Franklin did not put into his tablets, which some persons should place first ;—patience and self-vigilance.

The first object in a well-concerted system of conduct should be the proper employment and distribution of time. There have been many rules given for this ; we shall add but a few : one is, to make our employments succeed each other in such a way, as to aid each other reciprocally ; a second is, to have a flexible plan—that is to say, such a plan, that we can invert the order of exercises on sufficient occasions ; and thirdly, we should find the means of making a good use of leisure.

The regular return of the same employments, has the immense advantage of rendering execution easy and rapid. But it is extremely inconvenient to become the slave of this regularity, so that we cannot act when put out of our accustomed place and time ; and it is the more inconvenient, as we are the less sure of remaining masters of our condition. Order should not descend to too minute details ; it should not give too much importance to the distribution of accessories ; it should not impose useless chains. These exaggerations are inconvenient and vexatious to those who live with us ; they consume the strength which real duties claim ; they give to virtue something of puerility and constraint ; they retard us in the moment of action. It often happens, that those who superstitiously cling to these details, when they are forced to change, know not where they are ; they have lost all moral direction ; they are troubled, discouraged, and lose the faculty of doing right. The order of the wise man in life is like the order of nature in its works. If the latter is bound by general laws, which are constant, it is not a dry and rigorous symmetry, where everything is immovable ; it is a hidden though perfect order, admitting liberty, ease, and bending to everything, because it can foresee everything ; it is an order which we feel and judge of by its effects, but

which does not fatigue the eye by a scaffolding of rules ; it is, in a word, an order animated and full of life.

It would be useful to consider the art of conversation as a means of improvement. A considerable portion of our life is given to conversation, which we abandon to chance ; yet there are few things, from which wisdom might draw more advantage. Here, doubtless, we should guard ourselves against the exaggerations of method and regularity. Conversation resists a rigorous discipline. To turn it into a methodical dialogue, would be to rob it of its naturalness and that truth of expression which produces communion of mind and heart. But without robbing it of this character, we can make it useful. Without pedantry, with modesty, even with gaiety, we can put in circulation true thoughts and honorable sentiments. Sincere good will serves as an easy passport. And we cannot more delicately flatter, than to give others an opportunity of telling us what they know. Everything may be thrown into conversation, and everything may be gathered from it. It yields favorable occasions to draw close the ties which unite us to others, and to discover the means of serving them. The talent of conversation is a great power in the actual state of society. Vanity and ambition have used it. Can we do nothing for the interests of truth and virtue by means of it? The liberal minded and generous can alone comprehend all the privileges of speech, and draw from it the means of moral conquests ; for in order to captivate, they need only be known ; in showing themselves superior, they are so natural, that, as they rise without effort, so they are contemplated without envy ; always simple and sincere, they enlighten and persuade by the force of their own conviction, and by the ascendancy of the sentiments which inspire them ; we feel better in their presence, because we are permitted to sympathize with them ; they are the altars where our hearts are kindled and reanimated ; they exercise an apostleship upon earth ; the admiration which they excite, and the affections which they receive, being confounded with the wor-

ship of excellence, and language from their mouths becoming a celestial messenger, who announces the blessings of virtue. The good, also, supply, by the influence of their character, the want of a talent for conversation : we listen more willingly to the unpretending, whom we do not suspect of any artifice ; and the desire of being useful has in itself a kind of eloquence. A talent of listening may contribute to our progress, and furnish us with the means of being useful. To listen to a sufferer is often the means of consoling him. In the manner of listening there is something which testifies good will, and which serves to obtain it. In the study of mankind, the ear is what the eye is in the study of nature.

Such is the power order exercises over us, that the mere image of order, reproduced in the objects around us, favors meditation, disposes us to self-collectedness, moderation, respect, and many honorable sentiments. Hence the moral effect resulting from the monuments of architecture.

This powerful influence of order upon our faculties, explains an important observation, of which our experience of the world offers a frequent application. It is this, that submission to duty is a great advantage, considered merely in relation to the development of activity. Soldiers are less fatigued when they march to the sound of music. Man in ordinary life is less fatigued when he is aided by the melodies of virtue. Those who have duties, have fixed points, their regulators in indecision, and supplying inexhaustible motives of action. He who is without duties to fulfil, is often fatigued with the void and uncertainty of life : he demands unceasingly 'What is the object?' He often becomes a burden to himself. The same action is done more joyfully and satisfactorily, when we feel, in doing it, that we do our duty. Men without duties seek to supply their place with an occasional mania.

In the general plan of life, duties should form the foundations of the edifice ; the desire of excellence will achieve the rest.

Moral progress being internal harmony, and a well-ordered life being extended harmony, the one accords naturally with the other : they are the picture and its frame.

CHAPTER V.

DIFFERENT HUMAN CONDITIONS.

OUR condition in life composes for us the most important part of the circumstances which educate us. It influences our character more than all the lessons of our masters ; and, though independent of our will in some respects, yet it is modified by our cooperation, and even by the manner in which we resign ourselves to what is inevitable.

How admirable are the designs of Providence ! Even the inequalities of human conditions may draw closer the ties of humanity. Were there no moral sentiments, inequality of condition might, indeed, produce too great an excitement of emulation. But, as the case is, it enhances the merit of probity and the virtue of contentment : it gives rise to the exchange of confidence and good faith, of generosity and gratitude. In the latter intercourse, especially, the benefit is evidently mutual. The generous not only render important services, but they receive them from the example of those they benefit. Beside the affections which cannot be bought, they receive the most necessary instruction :—lessons of patience and of fortitude, and the sublime knowledge which springs from adversity. Ignorant of life, in the presence of misfortune, we learn to understand it ; ignorant of our own hearts, the sight of the unfortunate reveals them to us.

In order to measure and appreciate the means of moral progress, afforded by the different conditions of life, let us consid-

er the means of doing good, which each of them offers. The usefulness of services is different for those who render and those who receive them, and it varies according to their nature and extent.

Services, rendered from compulsion, may corrupt the receiver by the temptation to pride, and degrade him who renders them, by placing him in dependence. This danger increases for the former in proportion as the services are more important, and for the latter, as the object of them is sordid. Voluntary services, on the contrary, render the one party disinterested, and the other grateful.

Services of a moral and intellectual nature contribute to the progress of those that render them, by developing activity of mind, as well as drawing more closely the ties which unite men. We learn better and learn anew what we teach to others; and are more deeply penetrated with the love of excellence, when endeavouring to inspire others with it. But what snares does not pride spread for those who may serve others in this elevated sphere! How much must they guard against the love of power, and a want of indulgence! How carefully should they avoid believing themselves better than others!

Services which have a grosser character degrade the condition of those who render them, and only serve as a nourishment to the selfishness of those who receive them. When rendered to a single individual, they may consist with a most lively affection, but will admit of a dependence which threatens dignity of character. When rendered to a whole community, they have something in them more noble, but it is more rarely that they are appreciated.

Two other views present themselves, together with the preceding, which concur with them in determining the influence of the social relations on our improvement; one consists of the wants they excite in us, the other in the obstacles they oppose to us. Every want may become a principle of activity, or a cause of dependence, as it is more or less hostile or generous,

more or less pure or gross. If the obstacles oppose moral developements, they will doubtless be unfortunate; but if they only oppose the pretensions of selfishness, though they may irritate the passions, they will favor virtue;—if they are of a nature that they ought to be, or can be, surmounted, they will exercise our courage, and strengthen self-government.

But—and it is this which it is of importance above all to impress deeply upon our minds—whatever may be the danger or the advantage of our situation in society, there is none so unfavorable that we cannot obtain from it the means of becoming better—none so favorable but that in it we may morally perish. Our destiny is really in our own hands. The study of the advantages and disadvantages of different conditions, is useful, however, to guide us, when, as is sometimes the case, we can choose our condition; and to assist us in reaping all its advantages, when we cannot do so.

In general, where the greatest aids are found, the greatest dangers also are found, and the greatest duties. What are, in truth, the superior conditions of society, if there is not a mission conferred upon them, for the benefit of society itself? This is no less evident as regards those who are endowed with the gifts of fortune, than as regards those who are gifted with rank and power. Both are called to exercise patronage and fulfil a sort of guardianship. It is not sufficient for the former to make their authority subservient to the benefit of all. Because they are the strongest, they owe support and protection to the feeble; because they are more elevated, they owe the instruction of good example to all. It is not enough for the rich to be beneficent; they must serve as instruments to the développement and diffusion of useful things. The superior classes rise above society, like the clouds above the earth, to diffuse an abundant dew. What noble and beautiful duties! What a magnificent prerogative has been assigned them by Providence! The illusion of vanity, the selfishness of power and sensuality, the fatal error which would lead them to ap-

propriate to themselves the favors of fortune, which they only receive as a trust—these are their dangers! The absence of obstacles, the facility of obtaining everything,—these may still more increase their dangers. They may become weak, because nothing resists them. More than ordinary virtue is therefore necessary to them. Among their supports, the first rank is due to their remarkable opportunities for doing good; for nothing has so restoring an effect as the exercise of generosity. In giving, we learn to love; in aiding others, we become strong. Knowledge also gathers, from all parts, around him who is placed in an elevated situation: he has leisure to cultivate his faculties; he embraces a more extended horizon; elegance of manners and the habits of distinction tend to cherish in him nobleness of feeling: the attention of which he is the object, invites him to merit love by real claims of consideration and esteem. Everything, even to the luxuries of the arts, surrounding him with images of beauty, favors the principle of generous emotions, if he will but allow these impressions to penetrate his soul.

But the most general condition of man, mediocrity of rank and fortune, offers the most security, giving support and counsel, and imposing moderation upon desire. In this double relation, it favors calmness, and internal freedom. Its obscurity withdraws us from the yoke of opinion: simplicity is its natural inheritance. Men in this condition, practising their virtues without opportunity for display, less frequently find their motives corrupted by the desire of praise and popularity; they have more regard for morality, laws, for lawful authority of which the general interest is constantly the object. They are strong by supporting the limits which circumscribe them. Their activity is constantly excited by the sight of what may be acquired; perseverance is supported by the slowness of the progress possible. They understand justice, because they understand equality; they enjoy sympathy. The social relations allow them more frankness and self-forgetfulness:—in elevated

situations there is isolation—in equality, union. The affections of individuals are more intimate, as situations are similar, and there is more in common. In a word, mediocrity has the advantage of profiting by universal experience, and having no untrod paths to attempt; with the honors, it escapes the dangers of the *privilege*. Mediocrity has, however, its disadvantages. It encloses us in a circle whose uniformity and *monotony* favor blind habits of routine and a deadness of the active powers. It places us on a scene where similarity of situations and conformity of movements dispose to servile imitation. Leading constantly to details, it exposes us to give them too much importance, and, by contracting the view of the mind, it may indirectly lower the tone of sentiment. Thus wisdom, which recommends us to accept with content the limits which mediocrity imposes on us, recommends us also to give to our souls independence and nobleness by the exercise of virtue, even in those circumstances which seem least favorable.

In proportion as we descend to the inferior conditions, we see that the sphere of existence for each individual contracts; privations and restraints increase, and external aid becomes less abundant. Knowledge, one of the most precious aids, especially diminishes; and duties, though they become more austere, become also more simple; and though what is required of us is more difficult, the law of relative progress requires fewer things. A courageous patience is required in that situation, whose circumstances tend to produce it. Some of the knowledge which is wanting would perhaps augment the bitterness of destiny: the experience of adversity, which is the most important to progress, is not wanting, and from this may be acquired a science, which can be obtained from no master or book. Though many advantages are refused, those which belong to laborous habits are not wanting, and fruits may be gathered from these, by attention and care.

Happy is he, who has known from youth the rigor of fortune! He was prepared for the hardships of life in this moral

gymnasium ; he was familiarized early with serious ideas ; he had a glimpse of the secrets of human destiny ; his virtues took profound root ; in short, he received a manly education. Gradually admitted to a happier situation, he will be less exposed to be corrupted ; he will be better disposed to make it fruitful for others as well as for himself ; he has learned to have a fellow-feeling with misfortune. And such is the natural progress of things, that the laborious and economical man will advance gradually to competence, unless crossed by unforeseen accidents.

The alternation of success and reverse is useful. We complain of the inconstancy of fortune, but its constancy would corrupt us more. Success and reverse enlighten us by their contrast : judging better of events, we understand how to resist them, and how to make them serve our purposes.

Could similar considerations be equally applied to the various professions of life, they would form, by their developement, a new branch of the economical sciences. We should see on the one hand what aid each profession brings, or what obstacles it opposes to moral progress, and the means of rendering this aid more efficacious, and of overcoming these obstacles : we should see on the other hand how the moral progress of individuals gives to every profession the highest degree of usefulness, and makes it contribute to the general prosperity ; and hence, come to this result, that good books and good examples, which develope in society patience, perseverance, probity, method, and other virtues, count among the means by which the common treasury is augmented, quite as much as machines, and mechanical arts, although political economists do not deign to accord a place in their calculations to moral principles. In recognising that man is the principal instrument in every production, and that he is governed by motives and the light of reason, we should come to the functions of the moral agent. It is true, that these views, properly treated, would change the basis of many theories, and contradict more than one system.

The generally admitted distinction between the liberal and mechanical professions is not so decided in reality as it at first appears, for even in those which require essentially labor of mind, there is almost always a concurrence of mechanical operations; and in those which are composed essentially of manual labors, there is almost always some participation of intelligence; while between these two extremes the two elements are combined in every different proportion. But by means of the multiplication and progress of the mechanical powers, the mechanical professions are every day approaching the liberal professions; and man, learning that the past which belongs to him in the operations of industry, consists in directing, recovers his dignity in the exercise of his faculties, and becomes, at the same time, a more useful agent.

The more the mind is exercised in our profession, the better it is for our moral progress; individual dignity is better preserved; we feel more our independence; our active faculties take a higher flight; being more enlightened, we feel called upon to become better: we also find ourselves more wise; and all favors seem reserved to these beautiful applications of human activity. But with these advantages, there is always danger of abuse. The seductions of vanity, and the passion for success, seek and seize their victims. The balance which ought to be preserved between the intellect and the heart, is easily destroyed, when the directions of wisdom do not constantly come to reestablish it. The generous affections ought then to keep pace with intellectual activity. Nothing is more fatal than talent devoted to the service of selfishness.

But the liberal professions ought to be discriminated, in their turn, according to the kind of direction, which they tend to give to the intellectual faculties. Some especially favor vivacity of imagination, others the habit of speculation, or the spirit of observation, and thus react upon the culture of sensibility, or the development of moral dispositions. A moral manual for artists, for example, would be filled with warnings against ex-

altation, restlessness of character, and passion for applause. A manual for those who exercise the healing art, would be filled with observations upon the art of consoling and encouraging those who suffer, upon the discretion which is due in return for confidence, upon the precautions to be taken, lest the habitual sight of suffering should stifle sensibility. How many indications should a moral manual for the bar contain, upon the manner of ennobling and enlarging, by counsel, zeal, and disinterestedness, the assistance lent to clients : how many observations should it contain upon the scrupulous observance of the rules of equity, upon the care which should be taken, lest arms are lent to the passions ! Would not manuals for men of letters also be useful, teaching them to preserve themselves from the tyranny of self-love, from dryness of heart, from the susceptibilities and animosities that too often spring out of rival pretensions ? Lastly, would not a manual for philosophers be useful, containing antidotes against pride, prescriptions for good faith, simplicity, severity, and distrust towards themselves, indulgence towards others, and in which should continually be repeated the truth, that, in the science of wisdom, the practice of excellence is the first source of light ?

In classing the professions, as we sometimes do, according to the false ideas of the world, discriminating those that are paid from those that are not, we seek a basis which has no reality. Whoever turns the fruits of his industry into the exchanges which compose general commerce, receives pay ; that is to say, the just return for that which he delivers, whatever may be the name that he gives to it. There are only two exceptions to this universal condition ; the one concerns those, who have the happiness of being able to give gratuitously (without accepting any return) everything they put into circulation ; and this first exception is very rare : the other concerns those who do not conduce in any way by their own industry to the common welfare, but who, whatever may be the prejudices of the world, only consume without producing. From the high-

est public officer to the most humble day-laborer, all in effect receive pay. It is not pay which can humble and degrade ; but the spirit in which it may be sought and received ; venal intentions, cupidity, servility of character. In this necessity, which the constitution of society and the nature of things imposes upon us, of receiving pay for labor, we are continually instructed, that it is our destiny to serve mankind, either in community, or as individuals.

In some professions, however, the compensation attached to industry is more immediate, sensible, and frequently presented. It is then necessary, in these professions, to guard against the deleterious influence of sordid views. Interested motives contract the ideas, and freeze the heart. In vain shameful motive seeks to raise itself in its own eyes, by the extent of its calculations ; the passion for gold carried upon a wider theatre, only produces greater ravages. A moral manual, destined for professions, in which pecuniary interests are perpetually put in play, should recommend exercises that may bring generous sentiments to bear against the contagion of cupidity : it should indicate how equity in transactions should be preserved by good faith, or ennobled by delicacy ; how in the employment of fortune, the influence that springs from the means of acquiring it may be counterbalanced.

In the professions, which are calm and sedentary, whose operations are uniform, which are sheltered from the storms of passion, which afford facilities for regularity of life, it is necessary to guard against a moral lethargy, and habits which reduce existence to a sort of vegetation. In the professions, which are tumultuous and agitated, carrying us constantly into new scenes, fruitful in enjoyment, putting in play the active faculties, offering occasions of exercising the most varied virtues, and protecting us against routine, we should guard against the distraction, which dissipates thought and sentiment, and against restlessness and inconstancy of character : we should be armed with a severe self-vigilance.

Some professions have narrow prospects, are little subject to chance and hardly promise any advancement ; protecting moderation, exercising perseverance, patience, and sometimes resignation. Others are placed among dangers and hopes, fruitful in emotions, powerfully exciting ardor of will, and energy of character. In the first we should guard against dejection, discouragement, apathy of heart ; and create for ourselves a future by the affections. In the second, we should avoid rival jealousies, and preserve equanimity of soul. In the first, the love of excellence should be supported against lethargic influences ; in the second, by means of self-government, the seductions of fortune should be opposed by moderate desires.

Some professions put us in contact with things ; others especially in connexion with men. In the first kind of professions, it is useful to consider what kind of objects we come in contact with, whether we are surrounded with images sad or agreeable, harmonious or discordant, noble or mean, elegant or gross, austere or voluptuous : also, all the influence, however slight, that may be shed upon our moral habits ; and what care may be taken, lest we enervate, debase or corrupt ourselves, and how we may gather what may conduce to our elevation and purity of character. We should also consider the extent of our own power over things ; for method, and the habit of application are preserved by processes, which have the character of regularity, and are subjected to the rules of art and the genius of combinations. The sense of our dignity, also, is preserved by the power which we exercise over matter, and the boldness of the transformations which we constrain it to undergo. Views of general utility are more habitually presented in professions, which have most connexion with the common prosperity : in these we find most occasions of cultivating elevation of sentiment. We have often remarked, that habitual communication with animals produces a sort of grossness of manners—that the frequent sight and effusion of blood disposes to hardness ; and the first of these observations may explain why our

country people resemble so little those of pastoral poetry. Places in which we habitually reside, the objects we constantly see, secretly influence the dispositions of our mind and heart. The grave, simple, serious manners of sailors, doubtless arise in part from their familiarity with danger, but partly from the imposing spectacle of a vast and uniform object. The artificial elegance, which luxury displays in our dwellings, does not cherish the same dispositions as the grace and majesty of nature. The obscure and sombre asylum of misery redoubles sadness and discouragement by the images it presents. Those who have written on *preserving health*, have spoken of the influence exercised upon health by the habit of prolonging sleep during the day, and keeping awake during the night. This habit no less influences the dispositions of the mind and heart, leaving less freshness, simplicity, naturalness, and calmness, to the faculties of the soul. Moralists recommend, and with reason, habits of propriety and decency, with respect to the body, which serves as a transient habitation to the immortal soul; these habits of order should be observed even in poverty; they keep alive the sentiment of order, and preserve self-respect.

The relations in which the professions may place us with other men, are those of equality, superiority or dependence. The relations of equality are more favorable to the affections, to confidence, to the sentiments of justice, continuing through life the numerous advantages that infancy gathers from a common education: but they expose us to hostile passions, and the inevitable shock of rivalries. In the situation which gives us superiors, we should guard ourselves against servility and against irritation. In our relations with inferiors, we should be provided with equity, sweetness, and indulgence. The more dependence is undefined, the more it puffs up him, for whose benefit it is established, and debases him, who is subjected to it. But when dependence is founded upon the nature of an operation, which requires a concurrence of efforts, and conse-

quently a distribution, and organization—when he who presides is a chief rather than a master, and functions are determined by a common interest, obedience and command are better explained, being more limited, and are less liable to wound and discourage inferiors, or flatter the passions of those who give direction. It is still to be considered whether our profession puts us in relation with what is estimable in men, or with their passions. In the first case, intercourse offers useful encouragement; in the second, it exposes to a fatal contagion. Some professions rest upon confidence, and their success depends upon the extent of the confidence accorded to those who exercise them: such professions offer continual encouragement to qualities of character, which merit esteem. Why have our blind and frivolous prejudices attempted to dishonor certain professions, which have in them nothing immoral? Those who are condemned by us to render this kind of service, humiliated by us or perhaps degraded in their own eyes, hence more easily become despicable. In the professions which associate us with others, we should consider whether the association favors the spirit of union, always so precious, or *l'esprit de corps*, often so fatal, and what direction it may give to this last.

In public life are displayed the most brilliant qualities of character. It is the school for force of soul, reflective courage, elevation and generosity of sentiment; at least with those, who are penetrated with the duties that it imposes, and who are on their guard against ambition. But it opens a career to the most vehement passions, and renders them more dangerous, as it offers precepts to justify, means to disguise, and often fatal success to recompense them. A good moral manual for public men would be a benefit to the whole of society, if read, meditated upon, and followed.

Whenever institutions strengthen the ties, which attach the citizen to his country, founding laws upon equity, and regulating the exercise of power by laws, each individual comprehends better the community of interests and the reciprocation of

duties, drawing from the sentiments of patriotism the alimnt of virtuous affections, and from an enlightened submission to laws and magistrates, useful light upon morality ; hence activity is displayed, talent emboldened, souls are elevated, ideas are extended. Strong and generous institutions are the schools of great characters ; but they require a soil prepared for them : they cannot grow upon venal intentions, lust of pleasure, and calculations of self-interest. Under such institutions the moral progress of individuals, and the general progress of society correspond to each other, and lend mutual aid. Since institutions have for their vital principle the protection assured to the general interest, the education of a public man should consist in the exercises of entire disinterestedness, and he would find in his functions, when faithful to their spirit, a constant exercise of justice and benevolence. The sentiment of the public good is one of the most powerful antidotes against the selfish passions, against everything which materializes or degrades the character. There is, then, a tie more strict than we imagine between public and private virtue ; they have a common source. A purified morality creates that political conscience, too rare, perhaps, which sacrifices to the good of all, individual selfishness in all its forms, teaching the citizen to proclaim and exercise his rights only as a consequence of his duties ; the magistrate, to consider his authority as a message confided to him by society ; teaching the delegate of the people to recognise in legal authority a necessary pledge ; the delegate of power to recognise in collective or individual rights a deposit, which he is charged to protect ; teaching all public men to despise and brave the will of faction, and to guard themselves from the party spirit, which corrupts patriotism, agitates opinion, adulterates character, and becomes a source of intolerance and injustice.

Many of the professions have manuals prepared to guide them in the operations of art. Moral manuals would indicate the duties which belong particularly to each profession, the

manner of fulfilling them, and the advantages to be drawn from their fulfilment. Thus each one may take a more just, and, at the same time, a more elevated idea of his condition, considering it as a means of accomplishing his destiny as a human being, of becoming better and more useful to others. The different professions, like different nations, have each its peculiar physiognomy, manners, habits, customs, relations, even language: the comic writers have seized upon these to ridicule them: the moralist might gather and promulgate the code of duties, which are peculiar to each of the professions. To the industrious professions, for instance, he would speak of method, activity, vigilance, prudence, faithfulness, delicacy; warning the heart against dryness, the mind against the narrow views, which spring from habits of calculation, intercourse with material things, and the debate of pecuniary interests. To the chief of an establishment he would speak of the benevolence and protection towards dependents, the examples to be offered to them, and the manner in which the spirit of family may be diffused, where we now see only the exchange of labor and salary. If he should address himself to the professions, which put us in daily communication with the public, how many grand views he could present of the manner of obtaining and justifying confidence, by discretion, devotion, fidelity; of the moral influences, which, in these relations, we can indirectly spread abroad or receive; of the voluntary assistance, which zeal can join to necessary services! If he should address himself lastly to those humble, obscure, dependent professions, which our prejudices have degraded, with what tender solicitude, with what eager interest would he endeavour to elevate in their own eyes those who exercise them! What a reception he would give to these disgraced beings! How he would love to encourage them! He would show them how all their functions are ennobled by the sentiment of duty, how merit is measured by sacrifice, how loftiness of soul may be reconciled with exterior dependence, how virtue is more prized when under the veil of

obscurity; he would discover to them a treasury of the affections, joy and hope.*

One of the most essential rules for drawing from our condition all its moral fruits, for guarding ourselves from its peculiar dangers, is to conform our sentiments, habits, and views to our condition. We should guard ourselves, however, from misunderstanding this maxim, as condemning to servility of character the unfortunate. In the most humble condition, elevation of soul is the more necessary and desirable.

We need not fear that it would break the ties of subordination, or trouble the social hierarchy. True elevation of soul teaches contentment in adversity and obscurity. Your servant may be your superior in moral character and practical virtue, but he will therefore only fulfil more continually his duty towards you, and observe more exactly the consideration due to you.

CHAPTER VI.

LABOR.

WHEN we consider that labor is the condition to which most men are subjected, we are powerfully drawn to meditate upon a subject so much connected with our earthly destiny. At first sight, the philosophic friend of humanity is saddened at the view

* When we consider that the persons employed in our domestic service are confided to our protection, under a moral relation,—when we reflect upon the influence that their character and habits may exercise over our children, we cannot be sufficiently astonished at our culpable negligence of their improvement, of the indifference with which our public institutions and private usages appear to regard them. How little, for example, have we thought of preparing them, by a suitable education, for a kind of functions which demands such special qualities.

of so much fatigue ; especially when considering the kind of labors that form the general task, so monotonous, apparently so barren for the mind and heart ; and he asks with surprise, if this being, bent to the earth, exercising himself in a workshop, almost assimilated to mechanical instruments, is truly the immortal being, of whose noble origin and august vocation he has conceived ; he demands how such a state of things can be reconciled with the dignity of our nature ; how moral progress can be possible to those who seem condemned to a life wholly animal ; and he asks if, in the high ideas he has formed of the designs of Providence concerning man, he has not been led away by beautiful but chimerical illusions.

No ; he has not presumed too much upon the destination and dignity of man, or the hopes of improvement which are offered to him. Labor, if we see all the extent of its effects, far from destroying, confirms these views of wisdom.

Man here below is on all sides in contact, it is true, with material nature, depending upon it by means of his first wants, subjected to it by means of the impressions of his senses. But, by labor, material nature is subdued, conquered, transformed ; the invisible powers of air and water are seized and governed, and rendered fruitful ; and man raises upon earth the immense monument which the arts of civilisation have constructed for the use of human society. Thus the obscure labor of a simple individual takes, in our estimation, a new character. But it may have still more extended effects. From this competence, this general prosperity, which the process of labor brings about, springs knowledge, and all the moral influences developed by the social relations. The labor of a great number procures, for some, leisure for meditation ; and the fruits of these meditations serve as moral aliment to the many, conducing to their improvement and happiness. Thus each one, by his labor, besides producing what is necessary for his physical existence, concurs also, indirectly, in providing the useful knowledge, in which, in many ways, he participates.

Thus, everything, in the constitution and movements of society, may be referred to labor: it is the universal lever of the power of man over nature, the source of every production. In this relation, every kind of labor acquires a character of nobleness, being elevated to the dignity of virtue, becoming the fulfilment of a universal duty, and being converted into a tribute to the society to which we owe all that we are. We are too much accustomed to seek virtue in extraordinary and brilliant actions, or in whatever is out of the common course. We should recognise it in the most common actions, when they enter into the designs of Providence concerning our destination. Let us make it the very substance of our life, nor allow self-love to corrupt and satisfy our notions of excellence. Labor is a virtue; and this cheering thought changes entirely the point of view, under which man's destiny here below presents itself: for it is a virtue, which is the patrimony of all, and especially of the most obscure, the most numerous, and the least favored by fortune. It is a virtue, which consecrates all those unknown fatigues so ill rewarded; and which are even disdained by the world, for the tribute which they carry to the general prosperity. It is a virtue which impresses a moral character on occupations in appearance wholly material; a virtue giving merit to actions, that fill the largest part of our life, and which would have been done otherwise from mere necessity,—a virtue giving elevated motives for what we must at any rate do. The miner, buried in the earth, striking the rock with his hammer, and seeming rather to suffer punishment, than exercise industry, sees his existence reanimated, embellished; a light, purer than the day-light of which he is deprived, shines into his subterranean cavern; he cheerfully resumes the instrument, which had fallen from his discouraged hands, and says, 'And I also accomplish the sacred law, imposed upon the creature! For me also, life is the novitiate of a higher destiny!' This 'working-day-world' becomes a temple, whence arises the concert of a universal hymn, the hymn of submission to the supreme

decree. Thus man raises his brow with a just loftiness. The creature of God is not left with a withered heart and broken spirit. Is it not even the work of creation that his hand adorns and brings to perfection, accomplishing the designs of the Creator? Is it not the great edifice of society, which he helps to raise? What a hidden value he discovers under these gross appearances! This victory, gained over external nature, becomes the image and the emblem of a wise and sublime victory, that should be gained over the senses and passions. The first also disposes to the second.

In labor there is a moral mystery, profound and serious; it is a fundamental and necessary means of education for every individual.

A fixed and regular occupation is indispensable to man, preventing the disorder into which he is thrown by his impatience to move, combined with the uncertainty of his movements; relieving him from ennui; preventing his strength from being perhaps destroyed; preserving activity by regulating and guarding it from error. Labor subjects the senses to a salutary regimen, teaching them, that they are not only instruments of enjoyment, but organs of action, and means of useful production. It is the school of sobriety and temperance, preventing and appeasing the storms of imagination, dissipating vain delusions, turning us from vague reveries, leading us back to reality, and giving authority to the teachings of practice. Exercises of labor cultivate attention by the application they demand, and constrain us to perseverance, precision, method, and to enter into the secrets of method and perseverance,—secrets so important for the whole of our conduct. Labor restrains those secret desires, whose unregulated impetuosity would not be perhaps sufficiently prevented by mere reason; thus assisting wisdom to preserve moderation, and with it, inward peace, the balance of the faculties, and the health of the soul.

Under the protection of serious and regular habits of labor, man tastes more security, being better defended against the

ness, the ~~inherent~~ finding a refuge, his efficiency a source of instruction to make himself continually, struggling as he is, with difficulties, suffering privation, especially of sleep, the strengthened ally, and in proportion as these labors are painful, his will becomes powerful, and by patience he acquires the habit, which renders him capable of perseverance, and in fact, the habit, in adverse conditions, notwithstanding our dissimilar prejudices, experience, generally, a moral, inviolable, benevolent, unsuspected by the world, undisturbed by the superficial observer, but well known to those who can obtain their confidence: maintaining a secret disdain of those who in the bosom of luxury, lead a life of indolence.

Labor is the school of resignation, teaching us our dependence and consequently our duties to others: correcting and punishing our vanity, and constituting a long, continued competency in that ending term, which defines human life, as a great production and a high responsibility.

Labor being the source and most legitimate origin of property, the working classes best understand the respect due to property, and consequently, an important branch of the notions of justice. Accustomed to see in the advantages of life a merited recompense, they are generally friends of order: the order of society being instituted to protect the labor of each, and to assure to him the products of his labor.

In fulfilling this modest but continual duty of labor, we form the most just ideas of virtue, conceiving better its true essence, under three principal relations: practising it as a severe regimen for restraining and repressing our ambition, we become convinced, that it is not founded upon opinion, or the applause of men, but is a reality; that it is an ordinary, equal, constant thing; that it ought to occupy every day, hour, instant of our life; that our soul ought to respire it, as the body respire air; and thus we discover the most magnificent prerogative of our nature, that of consecrating our existence to duty, by submit-

ting through free will and reflection to the destiny marked out for us by our Creator.

These considerations receive new consequences, when applied to the rustic labors, which are the habitual occupation of the largest part of the human race. The life of the husbandman is a true moral education, if he knows how to gather the instruction which it affords: the variety of his cares, the productions which recompense his efforts, the regularity of the phenomena of which he is a witness, the different circumstances which call him to reflect upon the utility of order, of economy, of foresight, his need of other men, even when loaded with the gifts of nature, the magnificent scenes constantly presented to his eyes, the testimonies of the goodness and wisdom of the Creator, to be gathered up on every side, the great harmony of creation, displayed around him; all these are lessons, and what lessons!

But all means of progress have efficacy, only as we avail ourselves of them; and labor is in this respect like all the others. We are not considering whether we draw from it the utility it offers, but whether we might draw utility from labor. The husbandman can hardly render an account of these influences; but he will receive an insensible and general influence, unless he condemns himself by a sort of voluntary degradation to an existence wholly material. It belongs to him to convert his humble cabin into a peaceful sanctuary of virtue.

Labor not only directly contributes in various ways to our moral improvement, but virtuous habits, in their turn, render labor more easy and more productive; a truth which is not less important, nor less delightful. The workmen who accompany their labor with their song, labor more easily in their serenity; and it is the same with the labor accompanied by the secret satisfaction of a good conscience—this internal melody giving a still more powerful charm. Who counts the fatigue of the day, if he expects a large remuneration at night, if he can promise himself a holiday to-morrow? Virtue joins this remuneration to la-

bor, and promises a magnificent morrow ! The burden becomes lighter, when the mind is serene and the heart content. We are more active and strong, when we wish to accomplish a good action. The method and perseverance, which labor requires, are not so difficult to those who are patient and subject to order ; and, if this is so in simple mechanical operations, what will it be in those labors that require the concurrence of the *faculties of the soul* ? Let us, then, embrace labor as a duty, since by this adherence to the views of Providence, we render its weight more easy to support, and its fruits more abundant.

CHAPTER VII.

PLEASURE AND REPOSE.

LABOR is not, however, without some charm ; the regular exercise of activity gives it an attraction, which becomes almost a want. The indolent give themselves to manual labor, merely to be delivered from the weight of inactivity ; and the most of our diversions are an imitation of labor, being labor deprived only of a serious end. Labor besides, produces the pleasures and joys of repose, which is a privilege exclusively reserved to it. Pleasure also is elevated by labor, which gives to it the character of a recompense.

Nature is pleased to recommend to us, by the charm of enjoyment, what is useful to us. Thus, this charm only belongs to repose, during intervals in which it is necessary to repair the strength. It ceases and gives place to *ennui*, if repose is anticipated, or prolonged without measure.

Nature, like a provident mother, not only invites us by the attraction of pleasure, to seek out what will satisfy our wants, but, with an amiable and tender solicitude, she has also sown un-

pleasures, which we too often
 gratuitously yielded. On
 peaceful shades, sweet harmo-
 nized with fruits and flowers,
 under a magnificent tent, the air
 itself, a vast banquet is pre-
 invited, and which is served
 at pleasures are not acquired
 especially to that most numer-
 ously favored by fortune, demand-
 ing disposition. These plea-
 sures are common, even univer-
 sal as they are limited within the
 inexhaustible, as their variety
 increases, they constantly reappear
 it is possible not to recognise in
 the design of a beneficent Provi-
 der the Creator of all things not
 to enjoy happiness here below,
 to repose himself in happiness?
 He reserves a place in the frame-
 work he has promoted them to the rank
 of punishment allowed us, we learn
 from a peaceful smile of contentment ex-
 cept a false wisdom which would re-
 fuse the Benefactor. By the natu-
 ral we have conflicts enough to sustain,
 privations enough to endure; we
 recover our strength by moments of relax-
 ation. Pleasure does good to the soul, rean-
 imates it. Man accomplishes on earth on-
 ly; recreation is necessary to youth.
 As we grow older, the more necessary is encourage-
 ment. Should we proudly disdain innocent pleasure?
 and should we not find serenity to temper, clearness to ideas,

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them, the new hopes which are excited, will enhance their price, and increase their sweetness. This moral intention, so just and so useful, will consecrate, as it were, the enjoyments which would have been almost entirely material, to which will be joined also even a religious sentiment, purifying and ennobling them. Pleasure and repose ought to be subjected, doubtless, to just limits, for the mere interest of enjoyment; but personal feeling has not the prudence to recognise and observe these limits: we ought to thank virtue for having instituted and guaranteed an economy so useful to our happiness. Besides, limits are necessary to preserve self-government and liberty: they attest the presence of the moral being even in the midst of pleasure, by the power exercised over pleasure, whether in accepting, rejecting, or moderating it. In the choice of pleasures, we should avoid whatever tends to degrade us; in tasting repose, whatever would stupify us. The refreshments of repose should be as animated as possible; those of pleasure, on the contrary, should preserve a certain degree of calmness. In both we should avoid grossness, and whatever engenders agitation, or resembles self-abandonment. Repose does not exclude vigilance, pleasure invokes it to preserve itself from the intoxication by which it would be corrupted. The means of rendering pleasure more true and its influence more useful, is to unite its secret relations, which address themselves to our noblest faculties, to the sensible impressions which compose its train, thus interesting both the heart and mind. The senses ought never so to invade the existence of man, as to occupy him exclusively: this would be, on his part, an abdication of his nature. Pleasure should be an ornament of life; the images of order should be reproduced in enjoyment; for the sense of beauty and propriety, rendering enjoyment more delicate, preserves its purity.

The prejudices of the world accord an excessive indulgence to libertinism, and seem even to encourage it, unless it is carried to the last excess: when joined to brilliant qualities, it is

often excused, sometimes even applauded, and especially if successful. These prejudices are as fatal as they are blind, and it should be the first care of a sound morality to destroy them. Libertinism, in its external effects, profanes the most sacred institution of nature and society, violating, usurping, or destroying the family affections. It draws after it a multitude of failures in the duties of fidelity, delicacy, and good faith; conducting, often insensibly, sometimes suddenly, to the heaviest crimes.* At the same time, by a secret reaction, it carries a taint to the faculties of the soul, impairing dignity of character, enfeebling the power of meditation by rendering self-recollection more difficult, introducing into ideas and sentiments a sort of licentiousness and misrule, which hurts the energy of reason as much as that of will, despoiling the images of excellence of a portion of their charms; while by the effect of the habits it draws after it, the soul is enveloped in clouds, and the radiant light and pure notions of virtue are enfeebled. When the world treats with a marked severity the faults committed by the feebler sex, it finds a motive for this severity, in the influence these faults may have upon the existence and rights of families; yet, in the eyes of morality the distinction which it establishes is unjust,—not only because those who are more feeble are more excusable,—not only because we should be less severe toward those who are ill defended and have yielded, than towards those who have seduced; but, especially, because those to whom the world is most indulgent, ought to give an example of self-government; because those, whom it treats with most severity, were often seduced by an unregulated sensibility, the seducer having played upon this sensibility, devoting, or at least exposing his victim to the greatest of all misfortunes, to the mistakes of abused affection, and its consequent shame and discouragement. But what is this pleasure,

* If we examine the causes which bring criminals before the tribunals of justice, we shall be surprised to find how large is the number, whom libertinism has led to crime, in a more or less direct manner.

purchased at the expense of another's happiness, of the happiness of a sex, that Providence has confided to our protection? What is this pretended success, obtained by real cruelty? What is this mixture of pleasure and barbarity? What is this base selfishness which hides itself in empty sentimentality? What is this inconceivable, odious vanity, which counts as its triumphs the blackest treasons in the communion of hearts?

Pleasure can only be legitimate and pure, can only be salutary, to him who is innocent of all pain caused to another. Not only so: pleasure, to be complete, must be fed by social intercourse: solitary pleasure is always imperfect, narrow, and dry. Pleasures the most material take a new character, when tasted in common, and become a sort of symbol or channel, for the delightful affections of social intercourse. Pleasure disposing the heart to openness, the communication of enjoyment gives a deeper sympathy, and, reciprocally, sympathy gives to pleasure something tender and delicate. Selfishness is less displayed, when we thus enjoy the pleasure of others at the same time as our own. The tie which unites for a moment those, who sit down to the banquet of innocent pleasure, is one of the ties of humanity: it makes us feel and recall other ties, at least, confusedly, and thus raises what might have been entirely material in pleasure, indirectly favoring communication and overflowing of hearts, and the tacit engagement to reciprocal benevolence. These are pleasures really complete, shedding exquisite perfumes. Let us reanimate them by beneficence.

Philosophers have left to men of the world to eulogize gaiety: in this they have done wrong. They might have shown how an innocent gaiety strengthens and renovates the heart, in the midst of the fatigues of life; how gaiety prevents or dissipates the storms of passion; appeases anger, disarms enemies, dissipates the delusions of pride, brings us back to nature and truth, makes men approach each other, disposing them to confidence, indulgence, and mutual concession; how it favors the

transmission of the most serious and useful truths, covering them with a veil, which softens their severity. We may often insinuate, under the shelter of gaiety, what we could not have made men adopt by the most rigorous demonstration. An innocent gaiety seems to be the smile of virtue, recommending her, by showing her amiable, and announcing her happy.

The unemployed, who are discontented with *themselves*, not being able to find in pleasure its true end, a refreshment and a preparation, demand of it emotions which may excite or divert them. Thus they are driven to seek it out of nature, and consequently, out of the conditions of truth, and the prescriptions of wisdom. They therefore find it a poison, instead of drawing from it strength.

There is a repose fruitful and full of activity : how few are the men, who find it out ; but what power they find in it, who know how to taste it !

Human nature exhibits a union of two different natures ; and to this fundamental contrast correspond a crowd of subordinate contrasts, originating from it ; these are the active and passive faculties ; infinite desire and limited strength ; adherence to the past and avidity for the new ; the instinct of imitation, and the deep desire of independence ; inclinations and reason ; influences peculiar to contemplation and influences peculiar to practice ; to lonely and to solitary life ; lastly, labor and repose, pleasure and pain. But, in this long train of contrasts, the struggle is only apparent, and harmony, like utility, arises from combinations, which reconcile opposite principles. This grand result, which has been foreseen from the first, is constantly confirmed by the developement of our faculties, explaining our destiny, and affording a multitude of useful directions for our conduct. Man, a mixed being, aspiring to a better existence, yet subject to an imperfect condition, finds in it a remedy against pride, an encouragement for weakness, and a rule of temperance in everything.

CHAPTER VIII.

TRIALS.

How stern and terrible is this last part of the education of man! the perils and afflictions, which under so many different forms beset human nature, and which may come to every one of us, in the rapid course of our existence! How has it troubled the reason of the wise! How many minds, in the attempt to fathom the mystery, and to explain the course of human woes, have sunk! Some have lost all trust in the Supreme Disposer of events; others have imagined a malevolent spirit, equal in power to the good spirit, independent of him, and seizing the creature as a prey to its fury: so difficult is it to consent to receive the calamities of life as salutary trials, and to draw from them the instructions they contain!

Of one thing, however, we may be sure. It is this: we shall not be able to meet this portion of our life with vain speculations, or a merely poetical morality; we must struggle against realities which will admit of no illusion; truth alone, the firmest truth can endure so rude a contest: yet this contest is inevitable; we may not escape: it is also necessary; for suffering yields the most important knowledge, and the most powerful assistance. Shall its blessing be rejected? Shall we turn it to our destruction? The trial which is useless to us, is fatal to our character, and on that account, more difficult to bear; and is not this a proof that it was sent to improve our moral nature?

Under the general name of trials, we include dangers, privations, reverses, physical sufferings, and mental distresses. Viewed by the light of wisdom, the object of all these things is to try the human being; to teach him to know himself; to soften his character, to give pledges, and make him worthy of his high destiny. And it is because these instructions

are so important, and their fruits are to be manifested in the distant future,—it is because they teach man how to die, and form the creature for immortality, that the discipline given is so severe: for the same reason, also, this discipline continues, and becomes more active, when other moral influences are suspended; and especially towards the close of existence. Sorrow holds the keys of our mortal life. She ushered us into it; she opens also the passage to another life.

The seal of suffering, impressed upon our destiny, announces, in clear characters, our high calling. The most gifted are those to whom the deepest sufferings, those of the soul, are reserved, as a privilege. And sorrow ought to be the inheritance only of a being capable of progress. The animal experiences nothing worthy the name of sorrow; for his pains being merely physical, they are both unforeseen and transitory.

History shows us that great public calamities often produce great changes of character. Some, who are affected by them, rise rapidly to the highest virtues; others allow themselves to be carried to every excess of depravity. Among the former, we may often see those who have been abandoned, not only to frivolity, but to vice and degradation. Among the latter, we often find those, who before were estimable and regular in their lives. The same trial came to all: it produced such different effects, because it was not viewed under the same aspect, or received with the same dispositions. It reformed, strengthened, elevated, those who comprehended it: it left powerless those who did not know how to accept it. All disorders and errors may be explained by weakness. Those lost command over themselves whose virtues were only *mechanical*; who performed easy duties, under favorable *circumstances*; who never penetrated their souls to *destroy selfishness*. At the appearance of danger, selfishness prevailed, and took entire possession of them; trial only appeared as an oppressive spoiler, an enemy; and refuge was sought from a future which could not be endured, in disgraceful dissipation. But those

gained command over themselves, who had, amidst all their deficiencies, preserved a moral principle; which was roused by the presence of trial; they discovered the vanity of the transitory pleasures, which had engrossed them; they perceived that another destiny awaited them; they rejoiced in the instructor who teaches by correcting, in the physician who cures by a bitter draught. What history reveals, in these solemn events, takes place habitually among men: the same effects are produced by common trials, accordingly as they are yielded to, or as men raise themselves above them.

How just and salutary is that decree of opinion, which has made fear ignominious! Fear conducts to all crimes, by every kind of meanness. Nothing is so cruel as cowardice. Terror gives an absolute supremacy to selfishness; for it takes away all checks; bursting all the ties of affection; producing a sort of dissolution of the moral existence; chilling the soul, as physical fear chills the limbs; destroying, or, at least, paralyzing both the love of excellence and self-government; for he, who trembles, can neither love nor exert his will. No idea then is more false than that of employing fear as a moral influence. How can the image of virtue be depicted in the bosom of fear? what generous sentiment can spring from cowardice? Fear not only gives no notion of duty; it conveys an erroneous impression concerning it; it will never inspire a useful thought, a praiseworthy resolution. It is a great mistake to endeavour to reform man by debasing him. A certain kind and degree of fear may be employed to advantage in repressing impetuosity and violence, serving to restore equilibrium, and self-command: but at this limit it ought to stop. To have any salutary effect, fear should be joined with respect, thus preserving something of morality. This may be attained by associating it with the rules of justice; making it serve as an expression or an attendant of them: but then it ought to accompany justice, not conceal it.

Danger is of use, by warning the soul to collect its strength

and summon its forces : thus making it free of all shackles. The serenity diffused over the countenance of the hero—the spirit which lights up his features, when, on the field of glory, a thousand arrows fly around him,—may show us what is passing in the soul of the wise man, who is threatened with misfortune. As genius is exalted in the presence of obstacles,—so is virtue, in the presence of danger ; for it then learns to trust itself, and acquires the consciousness of its power and its dignity.

It is common and easy for courage to meet a definite danger ; but it is more difficult to brave what is vague and undefined : it is still more rare to carry into courage a moral motive. Yet this condition is necessary to render the habit of danger profitable to the character.

We are not astonished at the bravery of thousands, who expose their lives in the field of battle—often, without knowing why ; but it is astonishing to see a man expose his fortune, liberty, and life, in the cause of justice and truth. Yet the last kind of courage is much more reasonable and just ; it should be more natural. Have we not then false ideas of courage ?

The powerful charm of excitement is what supports in peril even those who seek it with ardor ; they know they may die, but in the mean time existence is more valuable. But this principle is more injurious than useful to the character. Trials will come, and such as require the most fortitude, when there is no excitement to assist us ; for example, those which require us to brave the unjust decrees of opinion. Moreover, in cultivating the taste for excitement, we lend to the passions a new energy, and common life becomes insipid ; obscure virtues lose their value ; duty appears a monotonous and vulgar thing. The brilliant qualities, which have been displayed on a boisterous scene, on our returning to common life, are often eclipsed, and vanish entirely in a series of regular and tranquil events. This is because these qualities were the offspring of passion, rather than of virtue.

Familiarity with danger disposes the soul to disinterested-

ness, and thus prepares for all kinds of sacrifices; freeing it from a crowd of illusions and puerile caprices; producing self-possession; giving seriousness as well as manliness to the character; and thus preparing us for the exercises of wisdom. There is, indeed, a thoughtlessness which accustoms itself to danger for the sake of amusement; misusing trial, by strengthening itself in an incurable frivolity. There is also a coarse and almost brutal indifference, which becomes familiar with danger, and braves everything, because it is interested in nothing; and which comes forth from trial, as impenetrable substances from the crucible, without the slightest transformation. But the heart is only improved by danger, when it knows it, as such, and measures the extent of the sacrifice. A contempt of life is always honorable in the superficial judgment of the world; because whatever are the causes of this contempt, there is something striking in it. Yet life is not to be despised; and it is neither rational nor allowable to sport with it. To expose it, uselessly, is not courage, but a culpable rashness, and the more culpable when a vain ostentation is the real motive of this sort of bravado. Contempt of life, we repeat, is not honorable; but to esteem duty and honor more than life, is only esteeming life at its just value. The presence of danger also causes us to appreciate more truly every moment of our existence; for, like a flash of light, it banishes all illusion, and annihilates everything false, calling to mind all that is ennobling in our present existence, whose value arises from what is to be perfected in that future for which it is a preparation. By showing us the shortness of life, danger also makes us feel how urgent is the necessity for employing it for the end for which it was given.

The trial of danger also gives self-knowledge, for it shows us the solidity and reality of our virtues. We must, therefore, endure it with entire tranquillity; for agitation bewilders our judgment; fright causes us to forget our resources, and our merits; and discouragement renders us unjust towards ourselves.

Wisdom has been defined by some philosophers, especially among the new Platonists, 'meditation upon death.' Let us avoid exaggeration, nor step aside from the path which Providence has marked out for man. Doubtless, life ought to be a great preparation; but, for this reason, it should be life, and not an anticipated and continual death. Some useful and proper feelings are weakened by the habitual anticipation of our last hour; some of our occupations would be interrupted, which still are duties. This continual contemplation of death may become an enthusiastic and mystical selfishness, producing a forgetfulness of the claims of society, and destroying the charm of those sweet affections, by which we are united to our fellow men. Let us not dispute with others this rare degree of perfection, of which they are so jealous: let our kind of progress be that which belongs to more common men; that which demands, in the first place, faithfulness to the dictates of prudence and nature. Let our motto be 'the wise man, looking forward to death, makes the best use of life.'

Reason, analysing the ills of life, discovers that the largest portion of them, and those by which we are the most affected, are of a purely negative character, consisting entirely of privation; also, that the privations which affect us, often have no other reality than that which we are pleased to give them; or, than that which artificial habits, conventional comparisons, have given to them. In this exact appreciation of the value of human things, consist the first principles of the science of happiness: yet who thinks of engaging in such a study, without the spur of adversity? Let us, then, be consoled for many sorrows, by the knowledge they bring,—and the wounds which they make will be healed. What a blessing may we draw from the mistakes of vanity, if, in the end, we learn to reduce to a just value, the good which vanity pursues; and to repress that blind and insatiable self-love of which vanity is the excess!

There are some remarkable and striking instances of ad-

versity, in which the sternness of fortune is balanced by the applause of the world. It would be very imprudent to miss an opportunity of obtaining such an honor: but there is less fruit from such adversity, as well as less merit. Pride is apt to corrupt us. We have not the same resources in the obscure vexations and trifling privations of life, but we reap much greater advantages.

Thus the world cannot sufficiently admire the resolution of the powerful and prosperous, who are overtaken by disgrace; though they only need a little reason, perhaps, to become really happy; while our indifference leaves unperceived, or our thoughtlessness despises the numerous examples of the heroism of poverty, which lie hidden all around and near us, and which might be made known to the world, and would challenge the veneration of all men. Notwithstanding the magnificence of the pictures, in which the good man in adversity has been set forth by the eloquence of philosophy, the subject is not exhausted; much, that is new, may be added, by the daily visitors of the abodes of poverty. To put out of the question its numerous privations,—the solitude, the isolation of earthly comfort, the suspicion and condescension which often wound in the midst of compassion, the family affections, which often become the source of the greatest sufferings, the most distressing anxieties, and the constant presence of all these things, without the presence of hope,—what a trial for the heart! what a revelation of the unknown is it! It has been reserved for Christianity to manifest to the world the heroism of poverty, and to elevate this condition to the rank of a moral privilege,—by the dignity it confers, and the virtues it inculcates.

The love of excellence is cultivated in many ways by the trial of suffering and privation. It favors concentration of soul, because the soul is delivered by it from illusion and distraction, and forced to create within itself a new existence. Selfishness, and the interests that throng, around it, are laid aside, and a new turn is given to the affections, by the manifestation

of a support, a comfort, an inexhaustible source of consolation in the perception of the realities of human destiny. The duties which are our laws, being shown as our true objects, we perceive that there is something positive and serious in that science of wisdom, which we are too apt to rank with mere theories. In presence of these noble images, the oppressed soul is renewed; virtue is seen under its purest forms; we are admitted into a more intimate communion: not only consolations, but celestial joys dawn upon us, which would have been unknown in prosperity. Oh! how beautiful does virtue appear, when thus, face to face, we find ourselves destitute of all other good, but possess her entirely, contemplate her unveiled, and offer to her a heart purified by adversity! But, would we penetrate these wonderful secrets, and obtain these salutary influences, we must enter the paths of trial with right dispositions: we must enter them with composure; not only with the external tranquillity of the senses, but with that inward peace, which belongs to a happy conscience: we must have a sincere desire for these instructions: we must preserve and cherish the power of loving, which alone can enable us to enjoy the sweetness of being loved, and consoled. The great book of adversity will in vain be opened before us, if, in order to read it, we do not first tear from our eyes the blinder—self-love.

The trial of privations and sufferings also contributes in many ways to the developement of self-government. It breaks the chain of habit, and the soul recovers freedom of will: placed in this new situation, we may study ourselves to more advantage, and shall be led to reflect upon our faults and the consequences they have had, and to discover how much reality there is in the virtues we thought we had acquired. We can practise restraint and temperance; acquire boldness and firmness of will; in a word, by moral intentions, we shall be able to change into a voluntary sacrifice what is imposed upon us by circumstances, and thus to form the true triumph of resignation.

We often and very justly envy those privileged beings, who have been permitted to devote their lives to a holy cause, to sacrifice themselves to duty, to suffer persecution for the sake of justice. But resignation offers to each of us a sphere of merit in many respects similar. Privations and sufferings that are sent upon us, though we do not choose them, may be accepted by us in meekness; and in accepting them thus, we offer a true sacrifice to duty; for it is our duty to submit to the will of Providence, in the events with which our destiny is marked. The less remarkable our duty is, the less it flatters our self-love, and the more greatness and purity there is in its performance. Enter that asylum, where lies, far from the eyes of the world, a person long exhausted by acute pain; having no other prospect than the same pain, continued to the grave, while each day takes from him some charm of existence; his days being without relaxation, his nights without repose; an incessant torture overpowering him, and the prospects of life consisting of a slowly approaching death. Every day brings to him a farewell: his intercourse with those whom he loves, continually becomes more difficult and rare; but during the course of a martyrdom constantly increasing, his serenity is constantly becoming greater, his patience more equable; he is disengaging himself from everything, without selfish regret; far from being occupied with himself, he is constantly inquiring with more tender solicitude into the affairs of those who are dear to him: he has an increasing ardor to foresee their future destiny: he knows how to love better than ever! Oh how much that is valuable has he learned in this terrible school! How much, in his turn, does he teach by his example! Such resignation,—suffering supported with so much constancy, why is it less noble than the immolation of Socrates?

Unfortunate beings, who have been called to drink the bitter cup of affliction! Oh that you would comprehend how much substantial and restoring nourishment it contains; how many precious remedies for the sufferings of the soul! Accept it with

courage, with gratitude even. And you, who are sent on the affecting errand of aiding the unhappy, remember that you have hardly commenced the fulfilment of your duty, when you have given support and comfort to the wants of the body. There are other consolations for you to give. The power of tender affection must penetrate the heart of the afflicted ; and to do this, confidence is to be obtained, which is a more difficult *thing than* at first appears. Friendship is the only cure that can be offered to sorrow. The last benefit, the most noble and useful part of your ministry, the benefit of which this established link of friendship will be the instrument, is to raise the sinking heart, and teach it not to despair of itself,—to aid the sufferer to discover, in the trial he endures, all the instruction it offers, to show him all the means of improvement contained in his misfortune.

But the most terrible, the most profound of all the mysteries of grief, is that which is reserved to the purest souls, when the holiest affections are converted into heart-rending sufferings ; when it is necessary to receive the sad farewell of the being to whom our life has been devoted, and to renounce the happiness of living for him ; when we can no longer hear the accents of that voice which excited us to virtue, nor longer clasp the hand that guided us in the path of duty ; when our guide, our support, our most intimate friend is taken away ; when that form, in which virtue seemed to breathe, has disappeared !

O you, who have explored the secret of all sufferings, is there any explanation of this last trial ; is there any means of rendering it useful to our amelioration,—deprived as we are by it of the most powerful assistance ? Doubtless, there are here also lessons, severe but sublime, and fruitful for those who are worthy to receive them. They are the last part of our education, and are intended to achieve our perfection. All the mysteries of grief are resolved in religious thoughts, and they only can fully explain it. When we raise our eyes to the prospects of religion, all the uses hidden in the trials of life, are

revealed. Then this sentence which condemns the heart to widowhood, becomes intelligible to the sensitive and tender; then is comprehended the true character and supreme end of the affections, which are so delightful; then it is discovered, that they can become more purified, that there are new ways of serving and honoring those we have loved; and grief becomes fruitful in good actions, and finds in these ties, not unbroken, although they have become invisible, a means of cherishing the noblest hopes: the temple where the worship of remembrance is celebrated, is enlightened with the rays of immortality! In the solitary exercise of goodness, the bereaved finds in himself the power of heroism; but bereavement was necessary, that he might obtain this power. A new career of progress opens upon him, as yet unknown, and which human wisdom could not have taught. The farewells of the virtuous are promises: we correspond in absence; we find each other again in the home of love, the summit of perfection, the true end of our destiny. There is a palm for this martyrdom of the heart; it grows on the confines of earth and heaven. To gather it, we must go there.

CHAPTER IX.

PROGRESS IN DIFFERENT PERIODS OF LIFE.

MAN is born with faculties and inclinations, and is laid under laws, intended to regulate both: this is all he brings into the world. We often demand of infancy what it cannot possess, as if it had a real and primitive stock, of which it ought to be already in enjoyment: at the same time, and, by a contrary error, we overwhelm infancy with what is factitious, when we should assist it, especially, to enter into possession of what is

destined for it. We are astonished not to find innate virtues. Even the good La Fontaine admits, that children are without pity; but we may remark, that pity supposes reflection, of which infancy is hardly capable. Children are selfish, it is said; but we may remark that children have little to give, and it is in giving, that we are exercised in loving. Early infancy is under the dominion of the passive faculties: the sensual nature is necessarily the first part of our nature, which is developed. The smile of the infant upon its mother, however, shows to an attentive eye something that cannot be perceived in any animal; the dawn of moral light, the blossoming of love. Children soon learn the delight of being loved, and acquire promptly a very clear idea and vivid sentiment of justice.

We find in children what we ought to find, germs, embryos, to be developed by favorable influences; but growth is often checked by circumstances, and false instruction. It is true, that self-love often shows itself naked in infancy, but is it really more powerful than in later periods of life? or does infancy only show it more ingenuously and candidly? Besides, it has not yet been enlightened by reflection and experience, which may reconcile it with devoted disinterestedness.

Of the two great moral powers, the love of excellence is the first to show itself, and it ought to be so; for it is necessary, in the first place, to conceive the end, and to aspire after it with earnestness, before means can be gathered to conduct to it. It seems to be the dowry of youth, having peculiar charms for it. It seems to ally itself to youth with a sort of predilection. What spectacle upon earth is more interesting, and, at the same time more natural, than that of a young heart, opening at once to the emanations of virtue and the affections of life, devoting itself as a consecrated priest to the worship of excellence, with all the rectitude of its age, and with faculties as yet unspoiled? The meditations of youth are full of seeds; its actions are promises; its days are rich with the future. It fears no withering; it is disconcerted by no doubts; it has not yet been deceived, and

suspects not what the terrible experience of the world will teach it ; it hardly suspects all the mistakes it will discover in itself. In fulfilling duty, the young seem to follow inclination, tasting enjoyment, rather than making a sacrifice. How precious is this enthusiasm, which makes virtue so easy ; this serene innocence, which conceives no danger ; this earnestness of soul, which, in aspiring to the best, hopes to realize the ideal upon earth ! How sad is that dissipation of mind, in which these treasures are wasted ; that excitement of the passions which quenches these hopes ; that unfortunate experience of life, which destroys this faith, and clouds this ideal ! The most of the wanderings of youth have their source in affections, laudable in themselves, but unregulated by reason and a wise self-government ; it is to make up for this want of self-government, that virtue is made so attractive to youth.

The love of excellence can, in the beginning, obtain a high degree of energy : it displays itself even the more freely in a soul yet new ; but self-government, on the contrary, is acquired only by long and painful exertion. The practice of obedience, and a deference to counsel, are offered to youth to supply its place. The young ought to feel the authority of others, because they are hardly capable of exercising authority over themselves. The sentiment of respect is a conservative principle for purity of feeling, and moderation of desire. To excite the love of excellence, it is only necessary to contemplate models, and to descend into the heart. But to guard against the wanderings of extravagance, even in excellence, there is need of vigilance and self-distrust, to acknowledge and understand guidance ; there is need of rules, of limits, which may strengthen by restraining ; of knowledge, which may hold the place of experience.

The second moral power, self-government, seems to be, in its turn, a privilege reserved to mature age ; to which everything becomes more calm ; which encounters, on all sides, difficulties and obstacles ; which is called to perseverance and

patience. Emotions are less necessary to it, for it has nothing to undertake ; it has only to go on : there is less assistance, because there are fewer dangers. However, mature age has also perils, less sensible, less signal than those of youth, but in some respects more fearful. There are no violent storms of passion, but there is an influence, chilling the moral life unless guarded against ; this consists of blind habits, which multiply and become heavier every day ; of the preoccupations of business, of the suggestions of false wisdom, which, through a superficial and imperfect experience of human life, believes itself to see a confirmation of selfish doctrines, and a condemnation of generous thoughts ; lastly, and in virtuous men, it is the abuse of self-government, and an exaggerated self-denial, which indirectly dry up some of the sources of the love of excellence. These revolutions are brought about insensibly, and we are surprised, when we find ourselves entirely changed from what we were in youth. We should constantly resist this insensible influence, rekindling the principle of moral life ; by the progress of reason, defending ourselves from the slavery of routine ; by the exercise of devotedness, preserving the heart from sleep and apathy. Moral activity may be preserved in the midst of external activity : by rendering ourselves useful to others, we cherish in ourselves the generous affections ; for practice cherishes sentiment. It is necessary, especially, to preserve religiously that faith in excellence, the true treasure of man, which so many circumstances tend to enfeeble, unless we appeal from these deceitful appearances to the testimony of remembrance and of conscience.

Whether we descend into ourselves, or look upon life, we are at first tempted to suppose, that the most beautiful years of youth are also the best, and that man decays morally with the progress of age. But this is an impression, rather than a judgment, and we are deceived by confounding the enjoyment, with the practice of excellence. This enjoyment may fail, for it was given to make up for the strength that was yet wanting.

The exaltation of enthusiasm, wisely directed, may contribute to progress, but does not constitute perfection. In proportion as we advance in age, our affections are enlightened by knowledge, our faculties tend to a more just equilibrium; and this is progress. Man does not decay morally, unless he loses his power of doing good; and, if his power does not grow, as his experience extends, and his reason is enlightened, and as he obtains more calmness, and as the motives to virtue are confirmed and multiplied, it is not the fault of his age, but only of his negligence. The virtues of youth act more vividly upon our imagination; but the serious, regular and peaceable virtues of mature age, reassure the attentive observer against the fear of a general and continual decay. The moral powers of man do, not only, not necessarily decay with those of his body, but grow as the latter decay. The youth of the heart may be preserved till death, as many admirable examples attest. There is no moral old age, except for the selfish; the selfish alone see what they have acquired consumed; what they have hoped, vanish with years. The love of excellence, which innocence of life and rectitude of soul have protected, finds again its warmth under the snows of age; it collects itself, rich in all its acquirements, to spread abroad all its influences, to celebrate, as a solemn triumph, that time which prepares for new and august destinies.

It is the destiny of old age to enjoy or to suffer the consequences of the years which have preceded. Nothing is more sad, than the decrepitude of soul, which terminates a selfish life; but what aliment for remembrance does he find, who has consecrated his life to the search after improvement! Virtue, in approaching the hour of recompense, is reanimated, as if penetrated with a secret joy. Old age is the portico, which introduces us to the temple of the great future, and it already has its majesty. Besides, we should guard against believing there is anything fixed, inevitable, necessary, in the moral condition of man in this world; there is still time in the

last years, even in the last days of life, to return to that virtue, which, like an indulgent friend, is ready to receive us : whatever progress we have made, there is yet opportunity for new progress, even in the age of repose ; there is still a period of education,—and of what an education ! For, to what a destination it conducts us ! Some resources are wanting to it doubtless ; but, if it encounter some obstacles peculiar to it, if it must defend itself from lassitude, dejection, timidity, inertia, the slavery of habit, perhaps, also from a secret tendency to suspicion,—on the other side, it has fewer enemies to combat, and has numberless and powerful succors : it can gather the fruits of the experience of life, which is intended as a school of virtue ; it breathes an atmosphere of calmness and serenity. The self-cultivation of the aged should consist in two principal points ; to seek and seize all the means of preserving moral activity, and of approaching other men by kindness. Thus energy of will will be sustained, while the affections will be constantly reanimated. These two counsels, moreover, are essentially connected ; the sphere of activity, which remains open to the aged, has especially for its object to spread benefits among others. O that they should complain of being useless ! What power is more beneficent than theirs ? Goodness of heart becomes in them more amiable, more touching ; the veneration they inspire, is mingled with tenderness ; their words are august and tender as adieus. What wonders this goodness of the aged can produce ; they are the flowers of autumn, which spring up abundantly in their steps ! They are only occupied for those they cherish ; they possess only to give ; the generosity which animates them, hastens to spread abroad its gifts, lest it should not have time : this generosity is the more entire and absolute, as it can look for no return ; for what real interests remain for old age, except those which goodness composes for it ! Lastly, what inestimable value in its gifts ; the most true and useful of benefits, examples and counsel ! Old age is a magistracy, instituted in the order of na-

ture by Providence itself, ennobling, consecrating, purifying him, who exercises it worthily; for we are always improved in laboring for the improvement of others. But, to fulfil this mission, old age should be accessible. It should learn the language of those it instructs, in order to make itself understood: by a happy return, it will itself be reanimated and softened. Is there not a secret instinct, which attracts it towards infancy! Infancy must gather under its protection the lessons which books do not give, and be formed in its presence to habits of respect; it finds in infancy the images of the true blessings, which time does not alter, and which the experience of life makes us appreciate better; the blessings, of which candor is the image, and innocence the pledge. This approach of old age and infancy is a sort of benediction, given to those who enter upon terrestrial existence by those who are near quitting it.

Between youth and moral maturity the difference is much less sensible in woman than in man. Women attain much sooner their moral maturity, and preserve much better the gifts of their youth. The love of excellence seems to prevail in them, as self-government in men; they have all the advantage which belongs to the preeminence of this beautiful power, as they are exposed to the dangers which spring from the loss of the moral equilibrium. In consequence of this preeminence, they have the privilege of being constantly called to the exercise of devotedness; they are also eminently gifted in the power of loving, and of forgetting themselves. They have the happiness of carrying private affection into the accomplishment of every duty; all their duties are special and personal. They have the happiness also of fulfilling virtues more constant. The career of progress seems to be circumscribed to them in narrower limits; also, they advance much farther, and more generally, in the career, than men. Their nature seems to be elevated and enlarged, in proportion as more difficult circumstances demand their generosity and disinterestedness, and as occasion is offered to love, and to prove how they love. Is immolation

demanded of them? they triumph. This example brings us insensibly to a fundamental truth, very necessary to conceive: it is this, that progress is relative for each individual. Nothing differs more than the career of progress open to the two sexes, although a general and absolute end is common to both. It seems, that the vocation of the one is to direct into the moral life all the powers of the affections; that of the other all the powers of the intellect; the privilege of the one is devotedness, that of the other is strength, so that in fine they exchange between themselves sentiment and knowledge, protecting each other reciprocally by tenderness and courage, and uniting in the beneficent and religious life, which is true activity and perfect love. Thus, the principal education of one of the two sexes, has for its object purity of heart, which is the ægis of sentiment, and that of the other, cultivation of reason, which is the ægis of strength, because it is the principle of authority over self.

CHAPTER X.

HOW INTELLECTUAL PROGRESS CONDUCE TO MORAL PROGRESS.

WHEN we speak of intellectual progress, in its relation to moral progress, it is necessary to distinguish two branches of the cultivation of the mind, which we are too much accustomed to confound; viz. that which consists in the acquisition of knowledge, and that which consists in the development of the faculties. By not having attended to this essential distinction, we have often perplexed important questions, and fallen into great errors.

It is not, that there is no natural tie between these two orders of intellectual progress; for the faculties of the undersand-

ing are only developed by exercise, and their cultivation profits by the acquisition of knowledge : while, on the other hand, in proportion as the faculties of the understanding are better cultivated, knowledge is more easily obtained, preserved, and applied. But these two kinds of progress do not go on always in accordance, and do not exercise a similar influence upon the character. Reason itself does not always become wiser, as the mind is more enlightened. Instruction must have some relation to the notions we possess already, and the applications we propose to make. Incomplete, incoherent knowledge may become an embarrassment and a cause of error, unless this relation is preserved ; the merit and usefulness of knowledge consists in its opportuneness and conformity to plan. Hence, every acquisition of knowledge is not profitable to the character ; that alone is profitable, which is connected with the art of improvement, and is in relation with our condition and destination. There is sometimes a salutary ignorance, which protects our happiness, in preserving us from indiscreet desire and deceptive ambition. There are also some truths, which we may abuse, and which may become, in our hands, hurtful instruments, because we have not sufficient experience to employ them, or, because we are not placed in a situation favorable to apply them, or, in fine, because we ourselves have not the dispositions, the qualities, and the strength necessary to use well an instrument, the management of which is much more difficult than we think. For we must remember that knowledge is only a means, lending itself in active life to every kind of effect ; and it may be made subservient to evil as well as to good. Not that knowledge is in fault : the fault is in the want of address, the imprudence, and especially in the blind vanity, which turns what might be a good into a poison.

There is, however, an influence which the intellectual faculties exercise over the moral faculties. This influence is directly propitious, and, as long as the intellect is well balanced, continues to be so : it begins to be hurtful only when the equilibri-

um of the intellect is lost, and one faculty usurps an exclusive sway. In other words, intellectual progress is always in itself favorable to moral progress. But we must not admit that the first can supply the place of the second. The first only imposes, on the contrary, a greater necessity and a greater duty of laboring for the latter, in order to preserve constantly the harmony of the two systems. Neither do we say, that one conducts necessarily to the other. We only remark, that progress of mind furnishes valuable aid for moral amelioration, but it rests with us to make this aid of avail in self-education; hence, we should be careful that the cultivation of the mind should tend to this noble end of human destiny.

It is true, that, in general, the cultivation of the mind, when it is well directed, tends of itself to nourish the sentiment of what is noble, pure and distinguished; bringing us back constantly to truth, which is the essence of good, and to beauty, which is its resplendence: it makes us feel a want, a presentiment of virtue; it is a foretaste nourishing the love of virtue, rendering the practice of it more easy and delightful when its sacred flame shall have penetrated the heart, to which it is attached by the most enduring ties. The sentiments of the true and of the good, being in their nature essentially disinterested, dispose the soul to generous movements, and prepare it also for acts of devotedness.* We consult our own testimony in the moments of self-recollection, when, free from the search after the treasures of intellect, having succeeded in seeing them, we enjoy them fully, and, when following the traces of genius and gathering its lessons, a new truth, and sublime conception takes captive our mind. How far are we then from the regions agitated by passion, or withered by selfishness! Is there not in the pro-

* We may remark here the utility which morality draws from the alliance of theoretic doctrines with practical counsels, and which tends to justify the plan of this work, and the opinion advanced in the preface. The practical maxims here laid down rest upon the doctrines laid down in the 7th and 8th Chapters of the first book. The moralists who pretend to found morality upon utility are conducted to other consequences.

found conviction produced by truth, in the emotion excited by the beautiful, a secret power, which renders us more capable of feeling what is honorable, just, praiseworthy, moral? If at this moment we meet other men, do we not greet them with a deep and more animated good will? If at this moment an opportunity for a good action is presented, do we not accept it more naturally and earnestly? There is in truth, a solemn character, which disposes to respect; in the beautiful, an amiable character which attracts us. The acts of approbation and of esteem strengthen the soul, and give it repose: admiration elevates, purifies, expands the heart. To draw these salutary influences, however, from the exercises of the mind, our faculties must be directed to cherish the love of truth and the beautiful; too often, we must confess, we abuse these gifts, so that the mind corrupts and withers the heart.

As there are in the world certain humorous minds, which discover matter of pleasantry in the most serious things, which make burlesque spring from the sublime, because they have a natural talent for *travestie*, and for seizing a kind of contrast, by which we go from what is most distinguished to what is most vulgar, there are also certain minds inclined to change in a more serious manner what is elevated, by the aspect under which they see and present it; they are endowed with an unhappy talent to reduce what is great to dimensions most contemptible; it is a kind of buffoonery, exercised in a gloomy manner, although its authors ordinarily seek to animate it with false and cruel gaiety, by the employment of ridicule: those minds are prompt, subtle, naturally descending rather than mounting; seizing, not the essence of things, but their least accessories. In a majestic whole, they discover one point unperceived; they make it evident by a rapid stroke; they swell it by surprise, and thus break the harmony of the whole. The region of morality is especially exposed to their devastations, because everything in it being great and majestic, there is more to bring down. They gather their arms from general

and private history, and from the experience of the world, because virtue is never practised on earth completely, and because in characters, where it has established its sway, there always remains some imperfection and discord, from which slander may draw advantage. Simplicity, generosity and confidence excite in them a disdainful smile; the maxims of the wise are for them vain abstractions; the weaknesses of the great a subject of triumph. Perhaps they obtain some frivolous and vulgar applause; and is not this the meed of mountebanks? Frivolous men find in them the piquancy of variety, the charm of contrast and novelty; for is there not something new in seeing eternal truth overturned? The vulgar love to see an overthrow, as children love to see destruction. Besides, without confessing it to himself, more than one spectator will be pleased to see disregarded those models he has not the courage to approach, and which wound his self-love by condemning his cowardice. This scourge especially occurs in states of society in which mental enjoyment has become a sport rather than an occupation; or in which it is associated with frivolity, or with minds, which, enervated by the abuse of pleasure, fatigued by satiety and disgust, incapable of the energy which aspires to what is great, but tormented with a restless activity in seeking novelty, would obtain it without effort; or, where the extreme complication of social relations, and the continual collision of individuals favors the play, and assures the success, of those nice and quick observations, which seize the most fugitive shades in things, situations, and characters.

Let us observe the processes of nature in those successive transformations, which organized substances undergo; how unceasingly she dissolves to recombine, destroys to revivify! This is the image of the processes, to which the human mind is called. As we cannot know anything well, without examining its various parts, analysis should prelude intellectual operations; but this is only the commencement: we must finish by recomposition: if we stop here, we only produce dissections;

and the objects are deprived of warmth, motion and life. These habits of analysis produce great penetration, but this penetration may degenerate into subtlety; the mind may lose a portion of its nerve and vigor, may become less capable of combining anew the objects of meditation: this disposition, in multiplying doubts, will leave less means of freeing itself, because it will be more skilful in making problems, than in furnishing means of solving them. Such a direction of the intellectual faculties reacts upon the moral faculties, producing irresolution and withering the heart. If the philosophic spirit is a similar aberration, there is no doubt we should dread its influence to moral progress. But why give this title to what is not the spirit of true philosophy? The latter does not leave its operations incomplete; its analyses are preparations; it separates only to reunite; it does not destroy; it transforms; it renews.

In general, those habits of mind which become prejudicial to the character by the influence they exercise upon it, are precisely those, which, in consequence of some abuse or deviation, would be really hurtful to the understanding itself, even when giving to it, perhaps, some exuberance of special capacity.

It happens that this investigating spirit, which is the eye of the understanding, in directing itself too exclusively to what is external, forgets the use of internal reflection; therefore, with much science, it has not only little self-knowledge, but from want of inward vigilance, it becomes easily the prey of anarchy of heart; thus the culture of the moral faculties will languish in its principle; beside the distraction of the world and of pleasure, there is another distraction less fatal, doubtless, but which, taking away the habit of self-communion, deprives us of abundant resources.

But have not the inaction and torpor, and wanderings of the intellectual faculties deleterious influences, when acting upon the character more directly? Is not insensibility often the consequence of dissipation of mind? How many times our faults spring from inattention, as well as our errors, and might

be defined a distraction of soul! Virtue is rather neglected, misconceived, forgotten, than openly violated. But certainly the more the mind is elevated and extended, the better it will appreciate the vast relations of moral truth to human destiny, to social prosperity and individual happiness. The science of virtue is then the inheritance of great minds. Let us give to our intellectual faculties the education which they require, and then, far from having nothing to fear concerning their progress, let us employ them for our moral amelioration. Let us exercise them upon complete, just, and solid ideas, accustoming them to take right and regular views, and to remain faithful to nature. In the noble labors of intellect, especially, we should always be animated by worthy motives! The true and the good should always be invoked with sincerity, and consequently sought, for their own sakes! We should take care not to make them food for egotism; or stifle with venal intentions those happy emanations, which might come to us: we should never forget that the true and the beautiful are the common property of humanity; that the success obtained in their search should not become an instrument for our pretensions, but the means of spreading abroad invaluable benefits.

Philosophers have constantly accused imagination of being the irreconcilable enemy of our reason, morality, and happiness; considering it the source of illusions that lead us astray; of the ambition, which excites us so excessively, and of all the agitations of our hearts. These views are in some respects but too just. Disorders of imagination may corrupt, in a thousand ways, our ideas of excellence, cover them with a thick cloud, and give a fatal taint to the worship of which they were the object. Imagination is only called to fulfil subordinate functions, the part of obedience; and if it is abandoned to itself, the order of things is reversed, and self-government is inevitably enfeebled. Hence we remark, that the abuse of imagination enervates the character, giving new vivacity to the sensible impressions, which in their nature are all passive. It furnishes

abundant aliment to the passions ; it destroys peace, that principle of true force ; it substitutes soft and fugitive pictures for the solid substance of reality ; it gives power to illusions over the soul, which, in the midst of trials, was called to strengthen itself by resistance, hiding the combat, in order to dispense with vanquishing ; leading into reverie him who was destined to act seriously in a positive world, offering him only light, transitory objects, subject to his own good pleasure ; transforming his existence into a vain sport, the government of himself into a kind of anarchy, and leaving a free course to all the aberrations of independence. There is in the exercises of imagination something voluptuous, which lulls the soul to sleep. We breathe and feel with extreme vivacity, but as if in a dream. In a word, this capricious faculty resists in a thousand ways the inflexible and austere rules of right ; disorder of ideas gives birth to disorder of feelings. Among the different kinds of illusions of which the aberrations of imagination may be the source, there is one which demands to be pointed out especially, because the snares it spreads are most subtle, and may surprise the most honest : such are the illusions, which lead us astray in self-knowledge, deceiving us concerning our own sentiments, concerning the reality and the strength of our attachment to virtue : these illusions, encompassing us by enjoyments purely speculative, put us into a state of exaltation by the images of an ideal perfection, which charms our mind, without taking possession of our soul, without governing our character, without impressing itself upon our life. These images of perfection compose for us a sort of artificial and deceptive morality, converting virtue into a kind of delicious poetry ; but banishing it into the clouds, and taking from it that deep, secret, positive power, which it ought to exercise over our sentiments and actions : as if virtue were a recreation or an ornament, and not the rule of our existence. If wisdom proceeds by making sensible objects give birth to moral notions, imagination proceeds, on the contrary, by making moral notions take sensible forms, and veiling abstract concep-

tions in sensible figures. Let us defend ourselves then from a disposition, too common at present, of considering subjects belonging to the most serious destinies of man, under that aspect which we call their poetic side. We expose ourselves thus to make those artificial chords, which charm the imagination, prevail over the solemn harmonies of duty, to take elegance of forms for real goodness of heart, grace for truth, the symbol for the thing; introducing into the sound and pure worship of virtue a sort of superstition and idolatry.

But after having heaped upon imagination the heaviest reproaches, ought not philosophy to have been more just towards that brilliant faculty of the mind? Should not morality itself have better recognised the services which might be received from it? Confined to its legitimate functions, directed to its true destination, ought not this faculty, like all others, to contribute to the progress of our character? What is this power, which puts us in possession of the future, transports us to all distances, makes us conceive objects invisible to sense, introduces us to what is merely possible, sustains our strength by hope, extends the narrow sphere of our existence beyond the limits of the present? Would it not, merely by renewing the sources of our sensibility, fertilize the field of our virtue? Does it not, by refreshing and embellishing our inward life with pure and innocent enjoyment, restore our strength? Does it not, by attaching us to the contemplation of nature, conduct us in that alone to a great and instructive school? We would not leave our virtue to evaporate in a vain, fantastic poetry; but let us permit poetry to put itself in the service of virtue; to bring near to us the divine model; to lend its eloquence and its graces to the austere voice of duty. This entirely moral poetry, the messenger of excellence, Providence has made to appear in all its works. It breathes in all the scenes of nature, if we know how to consider them, not with the eye of the body alone, but with the attentive and collected eye of the soul: it resounds in the hymn of creation; it borrows majesty from the

phenomena of the heavens, varied and graceful expressions from landscapes and simple flowers. It breathes in the songs of man, when, the worthy interpreter of this universal concert, he restores the image of virtue to those scenes which seem to invoke it, and which become animated by its presence ;—in the monuments raised to the memory of great men, and to the remembrance of great actions ; in public solemnities, sacred to the honor of what merits respect, and to the confirmation of the ties which unite the members of society : in the imposing circumstances, which surround the magistrate, and decorate the temple of laws. It is this poetry, which raises the standard, at the sight of which patriotism rallies ; which gathers the palm decreed to heroes ; which composes all the attributes of glory. Let those creative arts, then, which are the pride and the light of the earth, gather round the holy image of virtue ! Let them announce its presence, and be transported in contemplating it with a truer and surer enthusiasm than can be drawn from earthly sentiments, and thus render themselves worthy of receiving from it an order of immortal beauties !

If we understand the true vocation of imagination, and the spirit in which it ought to be cultivated and examined, and its productions conceived and enjoyed, our soul will not drink poison, but salutary beverage from its brilliant cup.

Reason presiding over our intellectual faculties, moderator, regulator, supreme arbiter, assigns to each its department, its functions, its limits. Its attributes consist in this high prerogative, in the empire which it grants to the mind over itself : armed with method, it classifies, plans out, distributes ; armed with judgment, and supported upon good sense, it weighs and decides,—order and truth being its domain. It takes care of our intellectual progress, being charged to obtain general harmony. Its energy should always grow in proportion to the development of the subordinate faculties. Here, at least, no fatal influence is to be feared ; all the influences will be salutary. If reason is not virtue itself, as some wise men have pretended, it

is at least its sister ; having the same aspect, the same language, recognising the same authority, obeying the same rules, following in a thousand things the same paths, with a mutual intelligence and communication. Habits of order and of regularity, established in ideas, are communicated insensibly to sentiments in the whole system of life : serenity of mind favors peace of soul. Error has no good fruits : when it is allied to moral sentiment, in an unlawful union, the strength, given us to do good, is not only dissipated in useless applications, but is directed against the true end, tormenting others and ourselves under the most honorable pretexts. The false associations of ideas, which impose, under the name of morality, imaginary duties, tend often, by inevitable consequence, to corrupt at the foundation the purity of sentiment that belongs to real duties ; for frequent occasions present themselves, in which conventional and factitious precepts are at war with the rules immediately dictated by conscience. Hence, at least, arise perplexities, enfeebling the authority of conscience, if indeed conscience is not stifled by the blind and mechanical force of habit. Can filial piety, in its primitive integrity, possibly exist in the heart of the son, to whom is prescribed (as often happens on the coast of Malabar) the factitious duty of sacrificing his mother on the tomb of her husband ? What an infinity of false consequences and unexpected errors must spring from this one error ! Truth need not be feared, when in its place : and can it be out of its place ? Morality does not fear profound investigation, if it is but complete ; it fears superficial and frivolous views. Good sense is the friend, the guardian of virtue ; protecting rectitude of intention, and calmness of heart ; fortifying the soul by the plenitude of conviction. Communication with truth preserves security, confidence, constancy, resolution, and dignity of character.

When we have become capable of governing our minds, shall we not become better capable of directing aright the

movements of the heart? Shall we not have more means of self-knowledge, and consequently of moral self-government?

We may remark, however, that men given up to a life of study, are in general exposed to feebleness of character. But it is not to the developement which the intellectual faculties have received, that this apparent effect is to be attributed; it is to the want of equilibrium between the powers of the intellect and those of the will: they have not enough occasions of willing and of acting in external life. Hence a peculiar necessity to them of domestic affections, which may maintain a harmony of the faculties of the heart with those of the mind, and afford some active exercises, useful to other men. The more the objects of constant study have the character of generality, the more necessary it becomes, that a beneficent external life should particularize the object of activity, and be individualized upon persons,

CHAPTER XI.

RELIGION CONSIDERED AS THE ACCOMPLISHMENT OF MAN'S EDUCATION.

IF all the moral faculties of man aspire to Religion, Religion, by satisfying their desires, in her turn, gives them the most favorable culture. The religious sentiment, placed by Providence in the heart, awaits its developement in most men from the simple and sublime idea of a Supreme Benefactor. This sentiment is unfolded as naturally as filial affection in the heart of an infant who knows its parent. Constantly strengthened and enlightened by experience and reflection, it germinates in the bosom of conscience, as in its native soil; explaining, enriching, bringing to perfection every moral impulse in man. With-

out it, the intelligent creature is but an abortion, a fruit detached from the universal tree of creation before it had attained its maturity.

In the origin of civilisation, Religion is seen as the first instructor of human society. She is the mother of arts, of sciences, of public morals, and even of laws. As civilisation advances, she affords clearer light ; applying herself to morals and to happiness, she becomes, in relation to man, more beneficent, more grand, and more pure. So she begins with individuals, impressing the heart of the young child with the first knowledge of the just and good ; awakening the sentiment of duty ; and, after having accompanied him in all the trials of life, she brings him new strength and opens new perspectives, when his organs become weakened, and terrestrial things vanish before him. Never does she appear more touching or more venerable than when she enlightens with her divine rays the morning and evening of existence. She is the Alpha and Omega of our destiny : she is the wisdom of infancy, and the youth of old age. If, as we have seen, the road travelled by us here below, is but a great and continual preparation, we may remark, that religion embraces its whole course, contributing to our education, and possessing all the conditions which are necessary to render this education as complete and fruitful as possible. Very different from that given by our schoolmaster, this education is addressed to the most intimate faculties of the soul ; nourishing and developing them at the same time that it regulates their exercise ; cultivating them together, and in harmonious accord ; directing them incessantly to a practical application ; addressing their vital principle, to give them the highest degree of purity and energy. The religious sentiment, the sentiment which is expressed by adoration, includes at once love, respect, submission, gratitude, and confidence : it is a worship rendered to power, wisdom, infinite goodness, and infinite justice : there is, then, not a moral sentiment which it does not embrace, at the same time strengthening its principle and extending its sphere.


While it communicates to the soul a singular elevation, it also constantly recalls it to simplicity and modesty. It restores while it softens; moderates while it animates; associates self-distrust with the most heroic courage; and, as it at once offers to the creature, both the model of that ideal perfection towards which it directs the most noble affections of the heart, and the perspective of an unbounded futurity as a better existence, it constantly excites him to progressive perfection; at the same time powerfully aiding these efforts by the communion it establishes between the soul and its eternal Creator.

It is by loving, that we learn to love: it is by loving what is truly worthy of being loved, that we comprehend this great sentiment. Love, in the bosom of religion, has recognised its essence and original source; it flows from it constantly, living, and animated with immortal youth; it is purified in celestial fire, and spreads over the earth with abundant fulness, enriching and enlightening all. If the relations of a moment, founded on a community of interests so limited, suffice to create lively affections, what must be the effect of those eternal bonds, which embrace all that is most profound and most real in our existence? In all beings, who are united to us by society or by nature, man, instructed by religion, recognises a sacred deposit, confided to him by perfect and infinite love; the connexion of a grand fraternity is discovered; humanity becomes a family bond, a community of the future; there is nothing unknown, there is no stranger for him who reads, on the forehead of his brother, the character imprinted by the hand of God himself. Piety, from one extremity of the earth to the other, becomes the holy and magnificent sympathy of hearts. And what name shall we give to the affections (nature's most precious gift), if we despoil them of the religious sentiment, which is their soul? Will they be a charm or a poison? Shall we be satisfied or deceived by them? Without this sentiment, what would remain to be shared with those we love? In what thoughts should we understand one another? What poverty would there

be in our language ; with what trembling would our eyes meet ! What despair on the farewell day, on which we should lose each other ! Should we really belong to each other here below ? Our souls would but touch, in passing ; they could not mingle together. Love and happiness, the apparent ends of our destiny, would contradict each other. The selfish man would alone be prudent. Let selfishness and irreligion triumph together : snows, darkness, and annihilation are their empire. But deprived of religion, what is man ? What does he find in himself to love, to cherish, to protect ? What a melancholy sterility remains even in the eyes of selfishness ! Ah ! give this feeble, restless creature, religion ; he can then love himself justly and really, and taste some sweetness, and find some fruit in this solitary affection : the instinct which leads him to self, will be legitimate and satisfactory : separated from all created things, seeing all disappear from vision, all will still remain to him ; the Infinite will remain, the object of his worship, the end of his hopes.

The universal attraction of insensible matter completely attains its end ; preserving the universal harmony of visible nature. Will the noble attraction of hearts be deceived in its object ? Will they gravitate towards each other to be forever repulsed ? Can there be a principle of perpetual and general discord in the most beautiful region of the universe ?

Religion excites to sacrifice ; and sacrifice has been the general and fundamental condition of religious worship, in all times and places. Without taking pains to seek the explanation of this historical phenomenon, is it not because love, even unconsciously to itself, is the vital principle of religion ? We love but to bestow : the stronger our affection, the more it tends to self-sacrifice : thus man has never found anything sufficiently precious for a holocaust. This exercise of immolation is then the education of generosity ; but what will it cost to give ourselves for our fellow-men, when we feel that in this we devote ourselves to God ! This is the real holocaust which piety seeks, and goodness points out.



Religion is a science, simple in its elements, but immense in its applications. Is not the beautiful definition of Bacon eminently applicable to it? for where is there a more 'grand interpretation of nature?' And that portion of nature, best interpreted by it, is precisely that which touches us the most nearly, is the most essential to our happiness, the most necessary to the exercise of our activity—that which alone comes home to us, and is our very destiny. But it tells us more of the least insect and plant, than all the art of the zoologist or botanist: they show us the work, Religion the author. Religion alone unrolls the chain of causes, and explains the notion of cause; for there are no causes without the great First Cause: and what is true science but the theory of causation? Besides, what exercises give more grave or serious habits to the mind? What conceptions give a more vast sphere to its ideas, or place it at a point of view so elevated? What actions make it better comprehend order, that great instrument in the operations of the human mind? What influences introduce it better to meditation, rendering meditation easier, sweeter, and at the same time more profound? Religion is the lamp of the intellectual life, the inward teacher, carrying the eye of reflection over all the secrets of the soul. It is the polar star of genius, the supreme link of the greatest plans, the high revelation, which connects the visible to the invisible, the known to the unknown, the universe to thought. Thus poetry and the arts, when they attempt their highest flight, when they wish to immortalize their works, if they dare not directly invoke this celestial power, seek, at least in their fictions, the appearance of her shadow, and some features stolen from her venerable image.

Mind, without Religion, wanders through the universe, exiled, solitary, and, as it were, lost; perceiving only a surface, from which it is reflected, but finding no focus for its rays. With Religion it finds a country: her light becomes a vivifying ray, instead of being a fugitive spark.

What is most remarkable in the education, given by Religion

to the affections of the heart and the powers of the mind, is that in developing them, she directs with certainty, and by open and short paths, towards that moral perfection, which is their proper object.

There is not a single one of the duties, prescribed by natural morality, that Religion does not prescribe and ennoble by consecrating ; there is no counsel of wisdom or prudence, that is not recommended by her, that is not raised to a higher degree of perfection, and established upon a firmer basis. The code of excellence receives from her an august promulgation ; and as, in fact, this code is engraven on our hearts by God himself, morality, eternal as its author, is thus revealed in its origin and essence. The consequence reascends to its principal, to receive a new confirmation : it is not solely the law ; it is the Legislator himself, who appears and unveils himself, to declare and sanction his work in the sanctuary of conscience.

The understanding of the rules of duty may be obscure, and difficult ; by this, all becomes clear, fixed, simple ; rules take a form. Prescriptions of duty may appear dry and hard in abstract speculation ; in religion, they become animated, personified, full of sentiment, and express themselves in most eloquent language. When presented to the religious man in their true aspect, the order of society appears to him as an institution founded by the Author of all things : the justice of human laws, becomes an expression of eternal justice ; legitimate power, a delegation from on high ; the place assigned to himself, a vocation : thus, he accepts his lot whatever it is, and lives, because he knows whom he obeys, because in obeying he trusts him.

Man is but an instrument ; Religion confirms this truth : but what a noble instrument he becomes in her hands. Of all visible agents he becomes the first, because he alone knows the invisible Mover, to whom he serves as a lever ; he alone associates himself in the designs of this great Director by the power of thought. If, in disposing of himself, he exercises a control, this control supposes an authority, a right. Who confers them

upon him? This empire over himself, that we called a magistracy, we may now call a priesthood; for man becomes in regard to himself, the minister of God, and the dispenser of his benefits: an emancipated child, he rejoices in his liberty, because he may freely accomplish the paternal will. Invested with religious dignity, he respects himself; he esteems himself without pride; and, in circumstances reputed lowest by the prejudices of the world, claims a noble title, of which the world is ignorant. This sense of dignity will be so much the more modest and benevolent, as it is more just. What does he possess but the benefactions of the common Father? and why does he possess them, but that he may spread them? Behold him freed from the tyranny of opinion. What imports the judgment of the frivolous spectators, who direct it? He moves in the presence of a high witness, even truth itself. Supported under the weight of his own weakness, secured in danger, comforted in grief, surrounded by an all powerful protection, attached to a better world by bonds which nothing can sever, he does not exhaust himself by a stern resistance, but seeks refuge in a serene and gentle resignation, born of submission and confidence. Through the sombre clouds, accumulated round him by heart-rending sorrows, wounded in all his affections, he sees that luminous ray, which, descending from heaven, shines through and dissipates the gloom. The religious man, alone, deserted by the whole world, still finds one to console him; condemned to unlimited suffering, still preserves hope. Earth has its heroes; religion alone has its martyrs.

Religion alone explains the terrible and deep mystery of grief, in those forms in which it penetrates to the bottom of the soul: she does not dry our tears, but aids them in their course. Ye, who know the secret of such grief, can understand how she thus solaces.

Religion alone leaves to human faults an indefinite hope of pardon; that hope which the world so often refuses, which even conscience sometimes dares not grant; that restoring hope, in-

dispensable in the cure of these wounds, for rendering them profitable.

Not only do the love of excellence and self-government, find thus directly in religion their most powerful auxiliary; but all the secondary means, which concur in the education of these two great moral powers, receive also the most energetic assistance. Thus the joys of virtue are not simply the satisfaction given by the testimony of conscience; they are the effusions of a celestial joy; the joy of gratitude, which is permitted to acquire itself—the joy of love, which may express itself. Thus the prudence, recommended by duty, is not merely a wise forecast for the happiness of a few moments, but a dispensation calculated for an immense future. Thus the admiration, excited by the idea of supreme excellence, is not an enthusiasm for an abstract or speculative beauty; it is a worship of goodness itself, personified and living, of which everything good or beautiful is but the reflection. Thus order, which is revealed in the plan of creation, in the physical and moral world, penetrating us like a vast and continual melody, establishes and maintains the concert of our faculties. Thus, peace, the first of blessings, giving strength to the heart, and light to the mind; the source of all interior freedom; peace, the vital element, in which alone wisdom breathes, acquires a strength before unknown, and mortal creatures, fatigued and agitated by the storms of time, repose in a sublime communion with him whom nothing agitates because he is infinite, because in him all is immutable.

Even the inferior order of our sensitive faculties is awakened, and escapes the narrow bounds of animal life, roused from the tomb of matter by the holy voice of religion; all nature takes a soul, and a language responding to our spirit; the universe is opened, as the temple of the Most High: meteors appear as his messengers; the fruits of the earth grow as witnesses and organs of his kindness; the simplest flowers speak his indulgent goodness; the sight of a clear sky, a starry night,

the air we breathe, the ocean, even the tempest, all speak to us of God. Public worship, spreading over the earth, like heavenly dew, vivifies, consecrates, decorates the imposing scene of creation, by associating it with His Spirit. Private worship favors by religious meditation the exercise of self-recollection and reflection. Domestic worship purifies and protects the obscure asylum, in which the days of our earthly life pass, and exhibits the holiest spectacle on earth, virtue in adoration of God ; making of the little spot a sort of universe, filled as it is by the presence of God. Public worship transforms civil society into a moral community, and the concourse of individuals who were strangers to each other, into a family union. Its festivals are a necessary rest, both in rural and city life ; its solemnities break the monotony of time, and give a charm to the repose merited by long labor : its ceremonies hallow the most important eras of human destiny, as well as the revolutions of seasons ; giving to joy a graver character, to grief a mysterious sweetness ; nourishing pious remembrances, and keeping up a holy communion between those who survive and those who have departed, and covering the tomb with emblems of immortality.

Thus religion conduces to, and accomplishes, the education of humanity in society as in the individual. Moreover, life would cease to be an education, if religion did not mark out its end ; for it would cease to be a preparation, and the work would be wasted.

But, that the power of religion may be effectual, it should preserve in their integrity the conditions whence its admirable effects emanate. We find in its code this great maxim ; *nothing is worse than the corruption of the best.* Now its characteristics depend upon two essential points ; our inward religion should be that of love ; our worship should be the sincere expression of our inward religion ; the violation of the first rule, brings fanaticism ; of the second rule, brings superstition, terrible in its ravages, in proportion to the strength of the reli-

gious principle. Selfishness may find food for pride, and become more exclusive, ferocious and obdurate. Sensuality may degrade and make it subservient to gross and material interests. Ignorance may misconceive its true spirit, turn it against its true end, and bring it into contempt and abhorrence. The externals of religion may be assumed in bad faith, and engender the monster, hypocrisy; it may even produce that most fatal hypocrisy, by which man succeeds in deceiving himself, the only error which has no remedy.

If this magnificent gift of Heaven is not received into a sound mind and pure heart, it is adulterated by all our errors, and corrupted by all our passions. Wo, wo to him, who degrades religion by making it an instrument instead of an end, the first end of life; who makes it an accomplice of those errors of which it ought to be the remedy! He has dared to condemn to a base subserviency the ineffable queen of the world; and to what end is she made subservient? To power, or to vanity, or to avarice, or to ambition? There remains nothing else. And is not this idolatry? For what is an idol but any earthly object, which usurps the worship due to the Creator alone? Wo to him, who has dared to employ religion as a means of oppressing, tormenting, afflicting others, despoiling them of their rights, of their noblest riches, the treasures of mind and heart, when the Eternal Benefactor would distribute to all light, and happiness, with love! Is not this sacrilege?

To have traced the characteristics which constitute religion in its purity,—is it not to have named the regenerating worship? Is it not to have named Christianity? In this picture, do we not recognise her features? Is there on earth another worship, which has the essential characteristics of true religion? Who has placed all law in the love of God and of men, all worship in adoring in spirit and in truth? Who has consoled the world with the parable of the prodigal son? Who has said ‘suffer little children to come to me;’ ‘blessed are the peaceful, blessed are the simple; blessed are the afflicted,

blessed are those, who suffer persecution for the sake of justice?' Who has consoled the humble, and brought low the proud? A secret instinct has taught all nations, that initiations are to be obtained by trials: Christianity has explained this great mystery. It has elevated sacrifice and immolation to a sublime dignity. It has restored the idea of infinite perfection. In society it has proclaimed universal equality, the basis of all justice; in its application to individuals, it has taught the secrets of discipline, and sounded the mysteries of the heart, to satisfy all its wants. It has been upon earth the most powerful promoter of moral progress, because it has detached the mind from the thralldom of the senses, and the heart from the bonds of the passions, without misconceiving the conditions and the exigences of our nature; because it has made the essence of religion consist in progress itself.

Christianity has the incontestible glory of having formed, in all classes of society, and in the most humble conditions as well as in the most elevated, the most accomplished models of perfection that the world has offered. History shows no devotion more generous, no triumph over self more complete, than those which are peculiar to its records. It has pursued selfishness into its last asylum, and under all its forms,—pride, vanity, self-love; and it alone, perhaps, has succeeded in destroying these.

Philosophy studies man and nature: it examines the laws of the universe, and of those faculties which set man on its throne; it has arrived to three great results; truth, happiness, and duty. Enlightened by this study, it discovers beyond space and time, and the visible world, Him in whom all exists, lives, and moves, thus placing the most noble of creatures in the hands of religion, which alone can explain and accomplish his destiny. Thus reason pays a just and solemn homage to its Author. Happy and proud of thus having renewed the chain of being, and achieved its work, the intellect goes out again into nature, gathering up the influences of this sublime adoption: finding

in religion the source of a new life and new light, and hence feeling itself animated with a deeper wisdom. Philosophy still respectfully placing herself in the train of religion, will not cease to accompany man in this new and elevated existence : it will teach him to cultivate the faculties, of which religion shows him the value, and invites him to make the best use : it will assist him to prevent and to rectify the aberrations, that religion itself disavows and deprecates : it will render religion more honored by showing its titles, and more useful in our eyes by recounting its benefits. Proving the perfect accordance of true philosophy and religion, it serves, and especially in this age, the dearest interests of the cause of both.

THE END.



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